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ABSTRACT

Fundamental educational change is more difficult, complex, and controversial than the change professional literature has acknowledged. This Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) yearbook is a collection of writings that address the difficulties of educational change. Following the foreword by Frances Faircloth Jones and the introduction by Andy Hargreaves, the chapters include: (1) "Rethinking Educational Change: Going Deeper and Wider in the Quest for Success" (Andy Hargreaves); (2) "Schooling and Family in the Postmodern World" (David Elkind); (3) "Equity Lessons from Detracking Schools" (Jeannie Oakes, Amy Stuart Wells, Susan Yonezawa, and Karen Ray); (4) "Students' Perspectives on School Improvement" (Jean Rudduck, Julia Day, and Gwen Wallace); (5) "Teachers, Time, and School Reform" (Nancy E. Adelman and Karen Panton Walking-Eagle); (6) "Failing Schools or Failing Systems?" (Kate Myers and Harvey Goldstein); (7) "Setting Goals in Turbulent Times" (Mike Schmoker); (8) "Rethinking Assessment and Accountability" (Lorna M. Earl and Paul G. LeMahieu); (9) "Collaborative Action Research for Educational Change" (Richard Sagor); (10) "Networks, Reform, and the Professional Development of Teachers" (Ann Lieberman and Maureen Grolnick); and (11) "Emotion and Hope: Constructive Concepts for Complex Times" (Michael Fullan). A list of ASCD board of directors for 1996-97, review council members, and headquarters staff are included. Each chapter contains references. (LMI)

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RETHINKING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE WITH HEART AND MIND

EDITED BY ANDY HARGREAVES

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BOOK

RETHINKING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE WITH HEART AND MIND

EDITED BY ANDY HARGREAVES

ASCD
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AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
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1997 ASCD Yearbook

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Foreword

The words *educational change* have permeated the professional literature and the staff meetings of nearly every school faculty in the world. These are sacred words whispered at board of education meetings and in sidebar conversations of government officials. The words punctuate the reelection speeches of politicians, while business leaders link them to economic survival and quality workforces in their annual reports.

If change is to be meaningful, it requires time for gestation and deep roots. My first attempt at a flower garden included quickly loosening the soil just enough to stabilize the tender and fragile plants. At first glance the plants seemed to flourish because colorful blossoms appeared, but as the season peaked their shallow roots provided inadequate support, and the plants suffered. Had I taken the time to mulch, create deep and fertile soil, the plants would have thrived and lasted until the close of the growing season.

So it is with change in educational practice. There is no substitute for taking time to prepare the foundation for the desired goal and nurturing successes to fruition. Perhaps this is the time for analyzing how deep the roots for educational change have reached and how fruitful the results have been.

This ASCD Yearbook is a collection of writings about positive change for school success. The roots of these offerings serve to broaden our thinking about substantive change in educational delivery systems. Authors Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan remind readers that the engagement of the heart and being hopeful are routes to success in education. Other writers emphasize the significance of utilizing collaborative action research, networks, goal-oriented strategies, improved assessment approaches, and better use of time as mechanisms for educational change. David Elkind shares knowledge that the best of modern education might be combined with the best of postmodern pedagogy, while Jeannie Oakes and colleagues describe a study of 10 restructured, racially mixed schools as a mandate for equalizing schools.

Educational change has turned the world into a vast kaleidoscope of shifting patterns that increase the choices and decisions we can make for educating our young people. As exemplified by the writings in this ASCD Yearbook, wise choices have been made and nurtured over time with a rich and productive root system.

Frances Faircloth Jones
1996–97 ASCD President

Introduction

Andy Hargreaves

Educational change is everywhere. Never have so many schools and their teachers had to deal with so much of it. Responding to wide-ranging educational reform is an inescapable reality of teachers' work within the United States and in most other advanced industrial nations as well. Many of the changes are the result of policy demands and impositions for establishing standards-based reforms, close partnerships with business, implementation of new technologies, value-added accountability measures of school performance, portfolio and performance-based assessments, charter schools and other kinds of school choice, and a whole range of subject-specific initiatives, just to mention a few. Alongside these policy-led initiatives are important changes that schools have increasingly made, individually and together, to try to improve themselves. Bottom-up changes of this kind have been informed by better knowledge about successful approaches to teaching and learning—including teaching for understanding, multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, and many others. They have also been informed by a developing body of research and writing on the process of school improvement itself.

Over the last decade or so, the literature on educational change has stimulated school-centered change efforts, and helped teachers and principals cope better with changes initiated or imposed from elsewhere (for example, Fullan 1991 and 1993; Fullan and Hargreaves 1996; Berman and McLaughlin 1977; McLaughlin 1990; Rudduck 1991; Miles and Huberman 1984; Louis and Miles 1990; Sarason 1990; Stoll and Fink 1996; Newmann and Wehlage 1995; Hargreaves 1994; Hargreaves, Earl, and Ryan 1996). This literature has posted useful warning signs to educational leaders and other change agents about the significant difficulties that can undermine their change efforts if they are not attended to properly. According to this body of work, when educational change falters or fails, this may be because

- The reason for the change is poorly conceptualized or not clearly demonstrated. It is not obvious who will benefit and how. What the change will achieve for students in particular is not spelled out.
- The change is too broad and ambitious so that teachers have to work on too many fronts, or it is too limited and specific so that little real change occurs at all.
- The change is too fast for people to cope with, or too slow so that they become impatient or bored and move on to something else.
- The change is poorly resourced or resources are withdrawn once the first flush of innovation is over. There is not enough money for materials or time for teachers to plan. The change is built on the backs of teachers, who cannot bear it for long without additional support.
- There is no long-term commitment to the change to carry people through the anxiety, frustration, and despair of early experimentation and unavoidable setbacks.
- Key staff who can contribute to the change, or might be affected by it, are not committed. Conversely, key staff might become overinvolved as an administrative or innovative elite, from which other teachers feel excluded. Resistance and resentment are the consequences in either case.
- Parents oppose the change because they are kept at a distance from it. Professionals can collaborate so enthusiastically among themselves that they involve the community too little or too late, and lose a vital form of support on which successful schoolwide change depends.
- Leaders are either too controlling, too ineffectual, or cash in on the early success of the innovation to move on to higher things.
- The change is pursued in isolation and gets undermined by other unchanged structures (for example, when common curriculum outcomes are juxtaposed with traditional report cards or standardized tests). Conversely, the change may be poorly coordinated with and engulfed by a tidal wave of parallel changes that make it hard for teachers to focus their efforts.

Even with this impressive knowledge base and expertise about the factors that can enhance or undermine educational change, too many changes remain disappointing and ineffective. Successful, sustained school change that spreads beyond a few isolated sites continues to elude us. Why?

The basic problem is that fundamental educational change is even more difficult, complex, and controversial than the change literature has acknowledged so far. This literature has dealt relatively well with the technical aspects of educational change: how to build people's capacity to implement change, how to create strong professional cultures so that teachers can support and learn from one another in their change efforts, how to manipulate structures of scheduling and decision making to support and not interfere with change initiatives, and so on. But, with only a few exceptions (for example, Sarason 1990) three areas of teaching, learning, and leadership have been given little attention by this literature. These are the passion, purpose, and politics of change.

The chapters in this Yearbook push our thinking forward in these absolutely essential areas of educational change. Each of them grapples realistically but also hopefully and creatively with many of the seemingly intractable difficulties that people involved in educational change encounter: policymakers and administrators who see education as being all procedure and no passion, self-interested community groups who subvert schools' equity-oriented change efforts, schools whose failings are so deep-seated and extensive that any hope of improvement appears to be far beyond them, and so on.

My own opening chapter discusses the purposes and passions of educational change. It argues that our change efforts have been so preoccupied with skills and standards that they have not gotten to the heart of what a great deal of teaching is about: establishing bonds and forming relationships with students, making classrooms into places of excitement and wonder, ensuring that all students are included and no one feels an outcast, and so on. This involves a lot of emotional labor for teachers—a labor of love to be sure, but hard labor all the same. Change strategies that are preoccupied with standards, targets, checklists, and form-filling can leave teachers with no time to care for or connect with their students. When this happens, teachers feel that their fundamental purposes have been lost—with catastrophic results for their commitment and effectiveness. Emotions, I show, are not an alternative to reason, but an essential part of reason itself. If you can't feel, you can't judge. I argue that change strategies must therefore be directed more toward making schools into workplaces that recognize and support teachers' emotional relationships with their students as a vital foundation for learning, and, in the form of emotional intelligence, as a central aspect of learning itself. Teachers' relationships with parents, I argue, should also be emotionally meaningful. Yet most reforms designed to strengthen relationships between the school and the community, such as site-based councils or schools of choice, ignore this dimension and focus on market relationships or managerial structures instead.

David Elkind explores the relationships between school and community in greater depth. At a time when clichés abound about parents becoming partners in their children's education, Elkind takes a realistic look at what is happening to families and the schools that serve them in the postmodern world. Families, he says, have become more permeable. Boundaries between home and workplace, children and adults, and private and public lives have become more blurred. With increased outsourcing in the economy, more paid work is moving back into the home. Children have lost much of their innocence, are treated more as adults, and are accorded more rights. Elkind argues that because of the shift from nuclear to permeable families, major changes are taking place in schools quite independently of concerted reform efforts. Some of these—like a new honesty and breadth in the curriculum about different kinds of families and cultural histories, as well as the adjustments that are now being made to accommodate children's differences in cultural background, learning style, and ability—are clearly positive. But some of the changes have also been highly negative. Seemingly independent adolescents are left to rely too much on their own resources. Children from families that are fractured, overprogrammed, or stressed out receive insufficient emotional support because reform efforts see teaching as mainly a matter of proper technique. Elkind closes by helping teachers thread their way through these shifting sands of family patterns and educational purposes in the postmodern age.

In Chapter 3, Jeannie Oakes and her colleagues move the discussion of the changing context of school change from the family per se, to the culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse communities that many schools serve. The authors are critical of existing educational change literature for ignoring race and being color-blind. Their research on schools trying to implement detracking shows that white, advantaged parents often try to derail or sidetrack these efforts by threatening "white flight" or negotiating special deals with the school that protect their own children from the effects of the innovation (for example, by retaining honors programs, placing their children in gifted classes, or allocating the best teachers to them). Oakes and her colleagues urge us to confront these political realities of educational change, and outline some constructive ways to do that.

While the first three chapters show how the role of parents and communities in educational change efforts is underestimated in the change literature, Chapter 4 looks at how change efforts should involve students and their purposes in the task of school improvement. Politically, students are at the bottom of the school pecking order. Although students are meant to be the ultimate beneficiaries of educational change, they are usually the last to be told about it. They are even less likely to be consulted about what changes are needed and what they should look like. Jean Rudduck and her colleagues are long-standing advocates of student involvement in school improvement. Here, the authors examine students' views of schooling and school improvement as reported in more than 800 interviews, and they make recommendations for secondary school reform based on what these students have to say.

In Chapter 5, Nancy Adelman and Karen Panton Walking-Eagle discuss one of the most ubiquitous difficulties of educational change: time. Finding fresh time and being able to move existing time structures around are two of the perennial problems of school reform. Time pressures can grind teachers down emotionally and distract them from their purposes. Adelman and Walking-Eagle's chapter describes teachers' own experiences of coping with the time pressures of change and of searching for ways to circumvent them. They discuss the distinctive time problems that arise during each phase of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. On the basis of this analysis, Adelman and Walking-Eagle close with some positive and practical recommendations for managing time differently during the process of change.

Most of the existing change literature deals with relatively generalizable processes of school improvement that apply to most schools in most places. Building collaborative teacher cultures, establishing norms of continuous improvement, adjusting the pace of change to teachers' comfort levels—these have become virtual truisms of educational change. But do these change rules apply to schools in severe difficulty—schools that are "failing" or seriously troubled? Kate Myers and Harvey Goldstein, in Chapter 6, suggest not. Failing schools, they propose, do not just lack the positive characteristics of successful ones. They have active pathologies of their own. The remedies needed in failing schools may not be available in conventional school improvement theory. Myers and Goldstein discuss some of the drastic measures that failing schools may require. But unlike other researchers in this area, they also go further than this. They rightly recognize that how schools are designated as "failing" is a political issue as well as a technical one—with absolute measures of failure making schools and their teachers in socially disadvantaged communities particularly vulnerable to stigmatization and blame. So they argue for more sophisticated ways of picking out failing or troubled schools. In doing so, they reserve the strongest criticisms for those who want to pinpoint "failure" through comparative league tables of performance, on the grounds that the demoralization this creates often adds to the failure rather than mitigating it. Perhaps, they conclude, the damage created by such league tables of performance warrants restrictions being placed on the publication of school performance data, because information presented in this way may be prejudicial to the overall public good.

Mike Schmoker is keen to redress another imbalance in some of the contemporary literature of educational change—what he feels is its excessive preoccupation with process, chaos, and complexity to the exclusion of focusing improvement efforts on clearly definable goals, against which progress over time can be measured. Schmoker's chapter is not a simplistic step-by-step guide to goal setting and attainment, though. Indeed, he is highly critical of educational movements such as behavioral objectives and mastery learning, which trivialized goals and outcomes and deflected educators' attention from more important purposes. But in all improvement efforts, he says, it really is important to set and stick with a clear sense of direction, and to know how well you are progressing toward your goals over time.

Lorna Earl and Paul LeMahieu continue the discussion of educational purposes, this time within the thorny field of assessment and accountability. The agenda of educational change is a politically contested one. Education is the greatest gatekeeper of opportunity and a powerful distributor of life chances. In a socially divided and culturally diverse society, educational reforms always favor some groups and interests over others. Oakes and her colleagues demonstrate this in their discussion of detracking in Chapter 3. In Chapter 8, Earl and LeMahieu look at the similarly contested nature of assessment and accountability reform. Policy in this area, they say, is usually an awkward and ineffective compromise between the interests of those who want assessment systems to select and sort students according to singular criteria of academic success, and those who want such systems to improve diagnosis of individual students' problems, and the overall quality of teaching and learning. Earl and LeMahieu come down on the side of the second view. They richly illustrate what alternative assessment and reporting practices look like in one teacher's classroom. They also develop a corresponding view of accountability, which does not degenerate into paper accounting to others of what teachers' have done with their students, but which is elevated to a sophisticated, constructive, and well-informed dialogue among all educational partners about teaching, learning, and results. The best kind of accountability, they contend, is to be found in high-quality and well-informed conversations, and not in long tables of figures.

In Chapter 9, Dick Sagor examines the kinds of conversations that can occur among teachers themselves as they embark together on the voyage of educational change. Sagor presents what he views as being one of the most productive and underrated change strategies: collaborative action research among teachers in their own schools around issues and purposes that are professionally compelling for them, rather than in response to other people's agendas. As well as outlining basic principles and approaches to collaborative action research, Sagor also explores how very similar collaborative research processes, on identical topics and in similar schools, can produce strikingly different results depending on how well the collaborative action research process is supported within the school and outside it.

In Chapter 10, Ann Lieberman and Maureen Grolnick analyze what role even wider collaborations between teachers and their colleagues outside their schools can play in creating and sustaining positive educational change. Drawing on their study of 17 such networks, the authors show how "these networks, unlike conventional professional development efforts, build commitment by encouraging teachers and administrators to participate in shaping an agenda that is responsive to their questions, their learning, and their need for support as they tackle tough issues of teaching and learning." Networks, they show, promote change not by prescription but by challenging involvement and problem solving; they allow structures to emerge in ways that support activities instead of constraining activities within existing structures; they dignify the practical knowledge that teachers share together; they offer leadership roles to their members; and they offer opportunities for teachers to find colleagueship beyond their schools in circumstances that are not controlled by administrative or academic gatekeepers. Networks, Lieberman and Grolnick conclude, offer a different kind of space in postmodern society, for teachers to initiate and maintain change together around ideas and purposes that are important for them.

In the final chapter, my colleague Michael Fullan returns to the place of emotion in educational change and amplifies the power of teachers and schools as developers of emotional intelligence. To this theme of emotion he adds a second one of hope. In present times, when teachers are overwhelmed and demoralized by multiple, contradictory, and often nakedly ideological reforms, everything about their identities and purposes as teachers becomes vulnerable. But it is their hope that becomes the most vulnerable thing of all. For without hope, there is no commitment, no optimism, no sense that children's lives can be made better. When hope walks out the door, cynicism enters close behind it. So Fullan concludes by urging educators to rekindle their hopes. After all, he says, it is lost causes that are most worth fighting for. Finding fresh hope is not a Pollyannaish appeal to individual imagination and initiative, though. Policymakers, administrators, and the wider public too, he says, should take a hard look at how far their own prescriptions for change either rebuild teachers' and children's hopes, or destroy them.

Together, these chapters extend what should be on the educational change agenda, they realistically confront some of the most difficult and controversial problems of educational change, and they offer hope and practical guidance for surmounting these difficulties and bringing about positive educational change that benefits students of all kinds. I am proud to have had the opportunity to bring this thoughtful, passionate, and politically realistic collection of work together. I hope, in turn, that it will help push and support you further in your own educational change efforts.

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1

Rethinking Educational Change:

Going Deeper and Wider in the Quest for Success

ANDY HARGREAVES

Introduction

A few years ago, in *What's Worth Fighting for in Your School,* Michael Fullan and I argued for a new approach to educational change (Fullan and Hargreaves 1991). In the face of global tendencies to force educational change through externally imposed restructuring and reform, we emphasized the parallel and often greater importance of improving the internal interactions and relationships of schooling. We talked less about *restructuring* schools than *reculturing* them. We were concerned not with how teachers should commit to other people's changes but with how we might make schools into the kinds of places that stimulate and support teachers to make changes themselves. How teachers work with teachers, we showed, affects how well they work with their students. It was clear to us, therefore, that cultures of teaching should be a prime focus for educational change.

A central task in creating cultures of educational change is how to develop more collaborative working relationships between principals and teachers, and among teachers themselves. We pointed to the need for teachers to collaborate with one another with trust, candor, openness, risk-taking, and commitment to continuous improvement. In this chapter, I extend this argument further. I endorse the value of professional collaboration among teachers within the walls of schools, but argue that we now need to extend this collaboration beyond the school walls as well.

Teachers' professional communities can easily turn into incestuous and protectionist ones. Teachers who work with other teachers are sometimes less inclined to work with anyone else. Collaboration can include the school professionals but exclude the wider community. New and innovative secondary schools, for example, typically falter because enthusiastic professionals, their leading edge, fail to consult and involve the surrounding communities from which their students will be drawn (Sarason 1971). If we are going to work together successfully for positive educational change, teachers now need to move beyond their own communities of fellow colleagues. Our change efforts need to go wider, beyond the school, if we are going to make significant improvements in what goes on within it.

I shall also argue that educational change efforts need more depth as well as more breadth. At the moment, many of our attempts to improve children's learning and teachers' teaching are directed from the neck up. Assessment standards, reading methods, higher-order thinking skills, problem solving—all address only what goes on in children's heads. Focusing on strategic planning, cognitive leadership, or organizational learning, for example, similarly biases our change efforts toward the intellectual dimensions of teachers' work. Educational change theory and practice, I argue, doesn't really get to the heart of what children, teachers, and parents care about and do, or what moves them to do things better. Our change priorities fail to develop what Goleman (1995) calls the *emotional intelligence* of students and teachers alike: emotional intelligence that actually adds value to students' classroom learning and teachers' professional learning. Educational change needs more depth. We need to put the heart back into it. Once we grasp this point of how to go deeper, we can then go wider in our change efforts beyond the school in ways that are purposeful and emotionally engaged, rather than through means that are opportunistic (as in marketing) or bureaucratically superficial (as in school councils).

Why is it necessary to broaden our approach to educational change and school improvement? Many teachers are already overwhelmed by pressures for change *within* their own schools and classrooms. Don't they have enough to deal with already, without having to attend to yet more demands—demands that will now require teachers to extend their work beyond the school into homes, communities, and workplaces? Aren't we in danger of making schools into dumping grounds for social and economic problems that are really other people's responsibility? Are teachers to be at the beck and call of every pushy parent and pressure group that has a bee in its bonnet or an ax to grind? Surely the last thing we need is yet more diversion of teachers' efforts and energies away from working with children in their own classrooms. Put more money in the classroom, and leave teachers alone to do a professional job—isn't that a better solution? Who needs all this other stuff anyway?

I sympathize with these objections and reservations. It is true that many specious changes have been brought about under the banner of creating better partnerships between schools and other organizations. All too often, partnerships with industry have led to corporate dollars driving the curriculum in dubious directions; partnerships with faculties of education have come down to schoolteachers carrying the university staff's supervision load for them; and partnerships with parents have amounted to little more than cosmetic committee work, or to appeasing the demands of a pushy minority. It is also true that teachers have become increasingly and unreasonably buffeted by the single-issue demands of multiple interest groups and by the capricious policy whims of successive governments that have made education their altar of change and sacrificed teachers upon it. Partnerships are not always benevolent, and pressure groups outside the school frequently have more than the children's interests at heart.

So why should teachers and principals work with others outside the school for better teaching and learning within it when so many outside demands are politically suspect or bureaucratically time consuming? What's the problem here?

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

Schools need to make conscious and constructive connections with the wider world beyond them for several reasons. We'll look at six of them.

1. ***More than ever today, schools cannot shut their gates and leave the troubles of the outside world on the doorstep.*** Schools can no longer pretend that their walls will keep the outside world at bay. They have become porous and permeable institutions (Elkind 1993). Increased poverty creates hungry children who cannot learn and tired ones who cannot concentrate. Fractured, blended, and lone-parent families fill classrooms with children who are often troubled and present teachers with parents' nights of labyrinthine complexity. Outdated curriculum materials complicate the issue by presenting families with two parents and their biological children as the cultural norm. In the face of mounting social problems, schools have often been made the sole public response, at the very same time that wider social support and intervention have been trimmed back (Barlow and Robertson 1994). Although opinion polls indicate that most parents are not really dissatisfied with their children's education (Livingstone 1993), business and the media are trying to inveigh parents into being critics and consumers of their children's schools: exercising choices, asking questions, and making demands in the interest of trying to insure their offspring against uncertain economic futures (Grace 1995).

Increased rates and changing patterns of global migration, coupled with continuing low levels of teacher recruitment from visible minorities, also mean that teachers are often teaching "other people's children," whose backgrounds are unfamiliar to them and whose learning needs are unknown (Delpit 1988). In some of the large urban school districts with which we have worked, over 50 percent of the students are classified as English as a second language, and more than 70 languages are spoken in the schools. For teachers, "what's out there" beyond their school is not an academic abstraction or a futuristic projection. It stares back at them everyday through the eyes of the children they teach. The reality of "what's out there" is therefore inescapable. It is something that teachers already deal with every day of their working lives. Teachers' interactions and responsibilities are becoming more extended. What matters, is not *whether* teachers connect with what's "out there" beyond their school, but how effectively they do so.

2. ***Schools are losing their monopoly on learning.*** One in three young people now have access to a personal computer at home (Hargreaves and Goodson 1992). Many more make extensive use of television, video, and the music culture of the streets. For the youth of today, the geography of learning stretches far beyond the physical space of the school. New technologies enable many students to reach out and con-

nect with other students, other teachers, other worlds: to surf the Internet and ride the information superhighway without the teacher's immediate monitoring, support, and intervention. Learning can often take place as easily at home as at school. Schooling is now available in cyberspace. Indeed, home-schooling is enjoying a spectacular rise in popularity. Children may know more about technology than their teachers and be able to access learning more easily through it. Unless teachers get up to speed in using technology in their classrooms, the hold they have on their students will weaken. Equally, however, in their rush to compete with the computer age, and to keep their children's attention, teachers risk reducing education to entertainment and losing sight of their larger purposes as a result (Postman 1992, Stoll 1995). The computer age is chipping away at the walls of schooling and at the autonomy and authority of teachers within them. Indeed, by permitting worldwide communication at the tap of a keyboard, computer technology dissolves the distinction between "what's out there" and "what's in here" altogether.

In fundamental and far-reaching ways, new technologies are starting to redefine the social geography of schooling. Internally, they are challenging the spatial segregation of schooling into separate subjects and classes. Externally, students' capacity to access knowledge and information independently and to communicate with other children and adults internationally, is starting to dissolve the boundaries between community and school, making curriculum "relevance" a global and not merely an immediate and spatially "local" matter. Similarly, professional development networks for teachers challenge the spatial conventions of professional development as either school based or university based, and raise status issues about who controls such development by being able to define and distribute where it takes place. Teachers should not capitulate unthinkingly to new technology, but they clearly cannot turn away from it either. Their students will not let them.

3. Across much of the developed world, ***people are experiencing a crisis of community, and schools provide one of our last and greatest hopes for resolving it.*** Science and technology, rational planning, and modernization have eroded tradition and eliminated the places where community once thrived (Giddens 1995). The friendly clutter of the corner store has been replaced by the sleek lines and anonymity of the pedestrian precinct and the shopping mall. Many of the middle classes have deserted the city for the safety of the suburbs, where neighbors care more for their lawns than they do for one another. Affiliation with major Christian churches is in decline, as is attendance at religious services (Hargreaves and Goodson 1992). Only on the television program "Cheers," it seems, can most people find a bar where "everybody knows your name." The prices of consumer affluence have been anonymity and alienation. And the heaviest price has been paid by those too poor to participate in the consumer society at all, eking out their existence in the dislocation and desolation of the old inner cities, which modernization has left behind (Bauman 1992).

Recently, there are signs that people are struggling to recreate a sense of community and the meaning and support that are to be found there. They are looking for fellowship, searching for a sense of place. This search can be seen in

- The self-help and support groups that are springing up everywhere (Giddens 1990);
- The resurgence of religious fundamentalism (Ignatieff 1993);
- The talk groups and virtual communities being established on the Internet (Rheingold 1993);
- The simulated reconstructions of tradition in downtown restorations and waterfront developments (Harvey 1989, Shields 1992); and
- (Most ominously) in the trend toward upscale housing developments being constructed and presented as secure "communities" within walled boundaries that keep the barbarian underclass beyond their gates (Soja 1989).

The struggle for community should not create enclaves for the elite. It should not divide us from one another but benefit us all. Etzioni (1993) believes that if the moral infrastructure of our communities is to be restored, schools will have to step in where other institutions such as the church and the welfare state have failed. Sergiovanni (1994) argues that schools must play a much more vital and central role in community building; in providing care, developing relationships, creating common purpose, and fostering a sense of attachment among people to something greater than themselves. Because of its geographical convenience and its connection to the lives of many families, the neighborhood school is the most obvious focus for these community-building efforts. How schools can serve communities, build community, and be communities is something I explore later.

4. Teachers need a lot more help. The point about community is not just that schools can serve their wider communities better, but that these communities can also be an active source of support for teachers in school. And teachers can certainly do with the help. More and more social work and paperwork is getting in the way of classroom work with children (Hargreaves 1994). Scarcely a week goes by without schools being confronted by more imposition of endless change. My earlier research, and that of many others, has shown how working more closely with colleagues can reduce duplication, share the burden, provide moral support, and give teachers the collective strength to set priorities among all the demands placed upon them (Hargreaves 1994, Johnson 1990, Rosenholtz 1989). But even this is no longer enough.

If teachers are to change their classroom practice toward more intensive work with individuals and small groups—so as to accommodate the multiple intelligences and varied learning styles of culturally diverse students—then they need help inside the classroom as well as collegial support outside it. Doing so means bringing the community into the school and into the classroom in volunteer and paid positions: to offer clerical support, help in preparing materials, supervision of needy students, and assistance with children's reading. All these kinds of support already have a strong record of success in many schools, though as paid positions, they are often the very items that are most vulnerable to budget cuts. More radical is the idea of locating social work and youth services in the school so that teachers and social workers can collaborate for welfare of the children. More radical still is the notion that community members might even take on stronger roles in the classroom: by learning alongside and supporting individual students, easing classroom discipline problems as they do so; or by taking responsibility for some of the less complex instructional aspects of teaching, thus releasing teachers to attend to more demanding work. An existing example is sports coaching, but the notion can also be extended to more specialized areas of support such as computer instruction, and even to routine instructional operations like the practice and consolidation of basic skills.

The coming years will likely see an extension and reinvention of what it means to be a teacher's assistant or a teacher's aide (Mortimore and Mortimore 1994). Teachers may welcome this support in some ways but will be threatened by it in others. What will it mean to give up some parts of their teaching to people who are not qualified teachers? How will it affect their sense of autonomy and professionalism? Should teachers martyr themselves to menial work just to protect this sense of autonomy and professional control? Or can they share out some of their work in ways that enhance their professional authority instead of undermining it? Indeed, can good community support relieve teachers of some of their social work and disciplinary obligations, enabling them to concentrate more on their teaching? At the same time, how can we guard against risks of exploitation, of governments using inexpensive assistants to *replace* teachers and to deprofessionalize the work of teaching—instead of supporting teachers to reach the higher levels of skills and competence that the changing social world requires? Bringing the community into the school and classroom means that teachers will not only have to redefine their relationships with other adults, but rethink what it means to be professional and to belong to a wider profession as well (Hargreaves and Goodson 1996).

5. ***Market competition, parental choice, and individual self-management are redefining how schools relate to their surrounding environments.*** Although schooling is becoming more centralized in some respects—through the proliferation of common curriculum targets, learning outcomes, and standardized achievement tests—the day-to-day management and responsibility for meeting quality standards and performance goals is increasingly a matter for individual school determination. Schools are having to become more market conscious, more competitive for "clients," more preoccupied with image and public relations (Caldwell and Spinks 1992). School councils or parent councils have been widely legislated as one way to push schools in this direction of market consciousness and client responsiveness. It is clear that such councils are turning teachers and principals outward toward wider publics as they plan, present, and defend what they teach. The benefits of all this symbolic busywork for students are much less clear, however (Weiss 1993).

Market competition and school self-management may make teachers more diligent in courting parental support and involvement, and may even urge teachers to work more closely with their immediate colleagues to ensure the success and survival of their own school. This kind of institutional competitiveness, however, tends to divide schools and their teachers from one another. Decentralization can sweep away bureaucracy, but it often removes local professional support as well. Teachers have little incentive to work with and learn from colleagues in other schools when their schools are competing for clients. So professional development tends to become more school based, home grown, parochial, and mediocre (Day, Hall, Gammage, and Coles 1993). An unintended consequence of the self-managing school movement is that it is creating huge vacuums of professional development at the local level (D. Hargreaves 1995). Filling this vacuum means searching for new and better ways to enable teachers to learn from their colleagues in other schools (even in a world of self-management); to belong in a real sense to a wider profession, with all the wisdom and learning it has to offer.

6. Schools can no longer be indifferent to the working lives that await their students when they move into the adult world, or to the organizations that have the power to shape their students' futures. After leaving school or even university, students find there is no work for many of them anymore, or that the work is very different than it used to be. The economies of the developed world are in turmoil. Restructuring and downsizing are pervasive. Bridges (1994) comments that after the U.S. recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s, only 18 percent of the lost jobs had returned. In other recessions, the jobs eventually came back. This time, he says, the message is clear, "Jobs are going away, not just until times improve but for good" (p. 5). More than this, he observes, the way we package work into discrete, well-defined, lifelong bundles called jobs, is itself a fading phenomenon.

Part-time work, temporary work, and contracting out are the new ingredients of corporate flexibility. Their rapid growth is challenging our traditional conceptions of what work is and how it is organized, along with our relationships to employers, and the importance we attach to paid work within our wider lives. Handy (1994) notes that for more and more young people, paid permanent work will start later in their lives and finish sooner, compared to their parents' generation.

So it seems very likely that work will have a different prominence and provenance in the future lives of the young people we now educate than it has had for us. Just what that work will look like, how skilled it will be, and how we should prepare young people for it is widely disputed, however. Indeed, writers like Wynn (1994, p. 111) argue that "the perspective informing educational restructuring has a narrow approach, representing the interests of employers and business. This perspective sees young people only in terms of what they can offer a restructuring economy," and not in terms of their interests in a broader and secure livelihood in which finding love, forging relationships, forming a family, and becoming independent are all seen as important.

Employers' organizations like the Conference Board of Canada (1991) see the new workplace as being high-tech and high skilled, and want schools to prepare students with "employability" skills in communication, cooperation, taking initiative, and the like, skills that they see as appropriate to this corporate future (e.g., Conference Board of Canada 1991). Schlechty (1990), who sees the American economy shifting from manual work to knowledge work, argues that the task of schools should be to produce the kinds of knowledge workers who will have the skills and qualities necessary to operate in an information-based society.

Others contend that most Western economies are becoming pear-shaped, with only very few high-skill opportunities available for small technical and symbolic elites at the top (Menzies 1989, Lash and Urry 1994). Barlow and Robertson (1994, p. 61) put it the most provocatively: "While it is easy to find many examples of business criticizing education's 'failures,' " they say, "it is much more difficult to find concrete promises of real jobs by the corporate community." We have a job crisis in our society, they argue, not because schools are failing to turn out students with the requisite skills, but because transnational corporations are moving the jobs to other countries with weaker environmental controls and cheaper, more docile labor.

What are schools and teachers to make of all this? Some want schools to wash their hands of the business connection because it corrupts the curriculum. Instead, they argue, schools should return to a liberal curriculum that educates children in traditional civic virtues (Emberley and Newell 1994). While these critics may be right about the dangers of schooling being driven by business values, adopting the ostrich position toward economic change makes no sense. Students are as aware as anyone of the changing economic realities. They know that pieces of paper no longer provide automatic passports to security or success. As the job lights are dimming at the end of the educational tunnel, students are beginning to question their work ethic and the relevance of what their schools offer them (Hargreaves, Earl, and Ryan 1996). What's out there in the changing economy is also inside students' heads, in their anxieties and aspirations. There is a crisis of motivation in our secondary schools, and the changing economy is at the root of much of it (Hargreaves 1989). We should certainly critique these changing work realities as we connect with them, but we can't turn back the clock to simpler schooling for simpler times and act as if they are not there.

Many other people respond to the changing realities of employment by arguing for closer connections between schooling and work. They advocate partnerships with industry, corporate investment in education, business involvement in the curriculum, work experience placements for more students, more emphasis in schools on the skills that business requires, and managing and organizing schools more along the lines of businesses. These kinds of connections can provide a treasure chest of stimuli for learning. Or they can be a Pandora's box of corporate "hype" and financial expediency that threaten the moral purpose of what schools should do (Calvert and Kuehn 1994; Hoggart 1995, p. 32). The real challenge in connecting schools with the world of work, therefore, is not just to build partnerships with business, but to create partnerships that are morally defensible and educationally worthwhile (and to ensure they stay like that).

THE CHALLENGE

Schools can no longer be castles in their communities. Nor can teachers equate professional status with absolute autonomy. The forces of change are already making themselves felt within countless classrooms: in the characteristics of the children, in the problems they bring to school, and in the ways they approach their school work. Within the challenges and complexities of these postmodern times, teachers must find more and better ways to work with others in the interests of the children they know best. They must reinvent their sense of professionalism so that it does not place them above or set them apart from parents and the wider public but, rather, gives them the courage and confidence to engage openly and authoritatively with others who also have the children's interests at heart (and even with those who don't).

This does not and should not mean teachers running themselves into the ground with extra work beyond their existing responsibilities within the school. An evaluation of the Advanced Skills Teaching Initiative in Australia has shown that overburdened teacher leaders are likely to "live off past preparation" when teaching their own students in order to accommodate additional leadership responsibilities that are supposed to benefit those very students (Ingvarsson, Chadbourne, and Culton 1994)!

But when teachers work more closely with those outside the school for the benefit of their students within it, not any kind of partnership will do. Partnerships should be meaningful and moral, not cosmetic and superficial. Professionalism should not mean being condescending to others when we work in partnership with them. Partnerships should not be seen as missionary work, where teachers minister to the needs of the unenlightened and the less fortunate. Nor should "partnerships" open up teachers' lives to endless inspection by the prying eyes of parents or other community members in the way that was once true of many schools in the 1930s, and is still true of many rural areas today (Waller 1932). Work with others beyond the school to bring about positive change within it will require emotional maturity, openness, and assertiveness. It will need to rest on a firm moral platform where the children's needs are paramount.

If our attempts to go *wider* in our change efforts are to be educationally productive, therefore, we must also go *deeper* and examine the moral grounds and emotional texture of our practice, of what it means to be a teacher. To twist the words of a popular song, in a world where the walls of schooling are breaking down, successful change needs to be river deep, prairie wide. Otherwise, we will lose sight of what all this other work beyond the school is for. Rethinking educational change means giving it greater depth as well as breadth. Instead I want to explore the murkier, less well-charted waters of what it means to go deeper in *emotional* terms.

THE EMOTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

If our understandings of the theory and practice of educational change need to extend beyond the school, they also need to probe deeper into the heart of what teaching is, and into what moves teachers to do their work well. Good teaching is not just a matter of being efficient, developing competence, mastering technique, and possessing the right kind of knowledge. Good teaching also involves emotional work. It is infused with pleasure, passion, creativity, challenge, and joy (Hargreaves 1995). It is in Fried's (1995) terms, a passionate vocation. English primary teachers interviewed by Jennifer Nias (1989) spoke of their relationships to the children they taught in terms of care, affection, and even love. The "creative" teachers of young children studied by Woods and Jeffrey (1996) tried to generate classroom relationships that featured "interest, enthusiasm, inquiry, excitement, discovery, risk-taking, and fun." Their cognitive scaffolding was "held together with emotional bonds" (p. 71). Noddings (1992) argues that educational reform efforts too often elevate cognition above care as a priority for improvement. Care for persons, things, and even ideas, becomes marginalized as a result.

In a study of 32 grade 7 and 8 teachers, my colleagues and I also found that the emotional dimensions of teaching even affect how teachers plan. These teachers had been identified by system administrators as having a serious and sustained commitment to implementing common learning outcomes, integrated curriculum, and alternative forms of assessment and reporting in their classes. During interviews, most of the teachers told us that they do not plan their courses or units of work in a linear way that starts with the outcomes, then maps backward to identify the methods and materials that might lead to those outcomes being realized (Hargreaves, forthcoming). Rather, teachers start with knowledge and feelings about their students, with their intuitive understanding about what is likely to excite and engage those students, and with their own passions and enthusiasm about ideas, topics, materials, and methods that they can picture working with their classes. Often, they brainstorm these ideas with their colleagues, "sparking off" one another in planning sessions of great creativity and emotional intensity. Planning is seen as full of energy, movement, and excitement. It's a process where ideas are "piggybacked" on one another, "bounced off" people, and generally "bashed around"; where teachers are "springboards" for one another, "spin off" one another's ideas, "take risks," "go nuts," and engage in a "free-for-all" so that teachers feel "like a pinball machine." Only much later, as the course of study starts to take shape, do teachers then go to the list of prescribed outcomes, to check whether they missed anything and to ensure that their curriculum is balanced. The rational planning process implied by outcomes-based education is sharply at odds with the emotionally charged way that good teachers plan in practice.

You would not guess that teaching and leading are profoundly emotional activities from much of the educational change and reform literature. In the literature, issues like strategic planning, cognitive leadership, problem solving, and, more recently, organizational learning (e.g., Senge 1990) take center stage as proper focal points for change. The literature treats educational change, leadership, and teacher development in rational, calculative, managerial, and stereotypically masculine ways (Hargreaves 1995).

Some writers do give more credit to the nonrational, emotional aspects of educational change, such as the subjective meaning that educational change has for individuals (Fullan 1991), or how people can deal with educational change forces that operate in an essentially nonrational environment (Fullan 1993). This writing emphasizes the affective aspects of educational change that are embedded in trust, collaboration, shared meaning, and moral support (Fullan and Hargreaves 1991).

Some of this acknowledgment of feelings, emotions, and the self within the literature and practice of educational change has been prompted

- By growing frustration with the repeated and increasingly predictable failure of educational reform (Sarason 1990);
- By the obstinate problem of teachers' resistance to imposed change—with the implication that change efforts need to address teach-

ers' varying personal, career, and life stage concerns (Huberman 1993); and

- By equity agendas that have brought more women into middle management and school leadership, along with distinctively gendered orientations to change and development that many such women offer (Tabin and Coleman 1991, Acker 1995).

I believe, however, that in three important respects, this emotional emphasis has not yet gone far enough. First, the feelings, emotions, and dispositions acknowledged in the educational change and development literature appear to be safer ones like trust, supportiveness, and satisfaction. More intense emotions tend to be excluded from discussions of ownership and involvement in change, collaboration, and teamwork. Indeed, Nias (1989) sees intense emotion as a source of dangerous volatility in the safe places that classrooms and schools should otherwise be. It is as if there is a fear of the furies, of unbridled irrationality run rampant among the education of the young. Excesses of emotion, some feel, can interfere with measured judgment. Admittedly, the danger of this is very real. For as William James argued, "When any strong emotional state whatever is upon us, the tendency is for no images but such as are congruous with it to come up." Where reasonable ideas are concerned, James continued, "passion's cue. . . . is always and everywhere to prevent their still small voice from being heard at all" (James 1917, p. 70). Along with emotional expression, we all need what Goleman (1995) calls "emotional intelligence": the capacity not only to be aware of and able to express our emotions, but to manage and moderate them effectively too. Emotional intelligence is what prevents anger turning into rage, or sadness into despair. Balanced leaders and teachers are ones who are both cognitively and emotionally intelligent, able to draw deeply on both parts of their psyche (Deal and Peterson 1994).

Yet, not all passions are dangerously unruly, and truly great teaching and leading often come about when there is exhilaration, experiences of creativity and breakthrough, cathartic connections to real purposes and real lives. Such are the peak experiences in teaching and learning that connect with the passions and purposes of those who undergo them (Woods 1993). As Farson (1996) argues, "our most important affairs—marriage, child-rearing, education, leadership—do best when there is occasional *loss* of control and an increase in personal vulnerability, times when we do not know what to do" (p. 38). For it is then that people learn they are dealing with a genuine person, without facade, pretense, or defensiveness, not someone who is "managing" them (p. 39).

Sergiovanni (1992) goes even further than this and advocates what he calls "leadership as moral outrage," where "it is the leader's responsibility to be outraged when empowerment is abused and when purposes are ignored":

> Leadership by outrage, and the practice of kindling outrage in others, challenge the conventional wisdom that leaders should be pokerfaced, play their cards close to their chest, avoid emotion, and otherwise hide what they believe and feel (p. 130).

When there are "shortcomings in what we do and impediments to what we want to do," it seems natural to react not in ways that are cool and dispassionate but with rightful moral outrage.

Intense passions such as this, however, create unpredictability and threaten the control interests of those wishing to impose their will through educational reform. This is perhaps why the emotions of educational change most commonly addressed are ones that help defuse so-called "resistance" to change by encouraging trust, support, openness, involvement, commitment to teamwork, and willingness to experiment. It is emotionally malleable satisfaction, not impassioned and critical engagement or critique, that the merchants of imposed change most usually want to foster. For these leaders and administrators, emotion should be an analgesic, not a stimulant.

Second, the literature and practice of educational change tend to treat emotional states as accompaniments to rational thinking not as integral to reason itself. Some writers partially acknowledge the relevance of emotions to leadership and change, but treat them in behaviorist ways as physiological responses of emotional arousal to situational stimuli in relation to goal-directed behavior. This psychologically reductionist approach denudes the emotions of their human value and subjective meaning (e.g., Leithwood, Jantzi, and Fernandez 1993). Such writers attend to educators' emotional lives mainly in terms of their contribution to collaboration, climate-setting, management of the organization's culture, and establishment of the "moods" that accompany problem solving (e.g., Leithwood 1993). But it is still rationality, problem solving, and organizational learning that occupy the driver's seat of leadership and change.

Emotions, however, cannot be separated from reason, nor can judgment be set aside from feelings. William James (1917) put this point exceptionally well:

> Our judgments concerning the worth of things, big or little, depend on the *feelings* the things arouse in us. Where we judge a thing to be precious in consequence of the *idea* we frame of it, this is only because the idea is itself associated already with a feeling. If we were radically feelingless, and if ideas were the only things our mind could entertain, we should lose all our likes and dislikes at a stroke, and be unable to point to any one situation or experience in life as more valuable or significant than any other (p. 229).

More recently, Damasio (1994) and Sacks (1995) have shown how individuals who are brain-damaged in ways that make them emotionally flat can maintain cognitive intelligence in the abstract sense, but lose their capacity for practical reason, for making judgments of human value. This is because they have lost the feelings, the in-built biases that narrow down the scope of potential judgments into a manageable range. Although, Damasio (1994) argues that "we usually conceive of emotion as a supernumerary mental faculty; an unsolicited nature-ordained accompaniment to our rational thinking" (p. 52), in reality, reason and willpower, emotion and feeling go together. You can't judge if you can't feel. Our approaches to educational change must therefore recognize that emotion is integral to reason and problem solving, and not merely their "handmaiden."

Third, caring occupations like teaching call not only for emotional sensitivity; they also require active *emotional labor*. In her classic text on the subject, Hochschild (1983) writes:

> This labor requires one to induce or suppress feelings in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others. . . . This kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our personality (p. 7).

Teaching involves immense amounts of emotional labor—not just in terms of "acting out" feelings superficially, but also in terms of consciously working oneself into experiencing the necessary feelings required to perform one's job well—be these feelings of anger or enthusiasm, coolness or concern. In many respects, this emotional labor is a positive aspect of teaching. It is a labor of love. Classrooms would be (and sometimes are) barren and boring places without it. But emotional labor also exposes teachers, making them vulnerable when the conditions of and demands on their work make it hard for them to do their "emotion work" properly (Ben-Peretz 1996).

Describing what happens when the work of flight attendants is speeded up so they no longer feel able to care for their passengers as they would like, Hochschild (1983) concludes that

> the more often "tips" about how to see, feel, and seem are issued from above and the more effectively the conditions of the stage are kept out of the hands of the actor, the less she can influence her entrances and exits and the nature of her acting in between. The less influence she has, the more likely it is that . . . either she will overextend herself into the job and burn out, or she will remove herself [physically or psychologically] from the job and feel bad about it.

My own studies indicate that when teachers' work is similarly speeded up or intensified and teachers are overwhelmed by change demands, those who invest themselves most heavily in the emotional labor of the work are likely to become racked by guilt, feeling that they are hurting those for whom they care (Hargreaves 1994). Similarly, Campbell and Neill (1994) have found that English primary teachers trying to cope with a detailed and rapidly introduced National Curriculum often became impaired by their own conscientiousness, by their determination to make the best of unreasonably imposed demands for the sake of the children they taught. The costs of such intense emotional labor, when the conditions of teaching do not support it, are that teachers overextend themselves, burn out, separate themselves from their feelings (by insisting they are teachers, not social workers, for example!), become cynical (and blame their failure on the children or their parents), or leave the profession altogether (Hargreaves 1994).

This emotional labor is particularly important for women leaders in times of change. Blackmore (1995) argues that women leaders who are entering the principalship in growing numbers in many parts of the world are, in effect, becoming the "emotional managers" of educational reform. They take "soft" human relations decisions as malleable middle managers. Meanwhile, the top (largely male) executives and financial managers take the "hard" decisions that circumscribe the scope of self-determination for individual schools in which middle managers work. It is men, in the main, who mandate systemwide changes. They are largely the ones who cut jobs, shrink budgets, impose testing requirements, erect league tables of performance, and demand detailed paperwork for administrative accountability. Under the aegis of empowerment, meanwhile, women use emotional management to offset resistance to the changes and stimulate the desire to make them work. Blackmore argues that their role as emotional middle managers exacts high personal costs on the lives and health of these women. Emotional labor takes its toll when working conditions do not properly support it.

If educational reformers and change agents ignore the emotional dimensions of educational change, emotions and feelings will only re-enter the change process by the back door:

- Festering resentment undermines and overturns rationally made decisions.
- Committee work is poisoned by members with unresolved grudges and grievances.
- League tables of performance don't motivate teachers at the bottom to improve, but shame and humiliate them into even greater demoralization.
- Excessive change demands make the best teachers burn themselves out.
- Passive-aggressive leadership that masquerades as rationality and reasonableness engenders only frustration among followers who are exposed to it.
- Pedagogical changes fail when they do not engage the passions of the classroom.

Taking our improvement efforts deeper into the emotions of educational change is therefore no easy matter. It means more than getting in touch with our feelings, or than acknowledging women's distinctive contributions to educational leadership. Going deeper, rather, means understanding how to create workplaces for teachers that promote positive, even passionate emotional relationships to teaching, learning, and improvement. And it means protecting teachers from overextending themselves through their emotional labor and from becoming burned out or cynical as a result. It means reviewing and revising educational reform agendas and the ways in which they are implemented, so they do not negatively affect the emotional labor and emotional rewards of teachers' work, for example, by making teachers feel ashamed, humiliated, disvalued, and misunderstood.

AN EXAMPLE

Let's now consider one example of what it might mean to redefine our educational change strategies by simultaneously turning outward beyond the school and also inward to embrace the emotional aspects of teaching and leadership. There are many eligible examples to choose from, such as the relationship between education and enterprise, or between schools and technology. My colleague Michael Fullan and I devote space to these issues elsewhere (Hargreaves and Fullan, forthcoming). Here I want to explore what it might mean to go deeper and wider in educational change in terms of the relationship between schools and their surrounding communities. Building on a framework of three forms of school development planning described by Logan, Sacks, and Dempster (1994), I believe there are four broad types of relationship between parents and schools: market-based, managerial, personal, and cultural.

1. *Market-based relationships* treat parents as clients and consumers who can send their children to the schools of their choice (Ball 1993). The connection here is a contractual one, which tends to individualize and fracture collective social relationships between schools and their communities (Blackmore 1995). Although there are some exceptions, parental advocates of school choice tend to be articulate, white, and well-organized members of the middle class. They are, in general, prompted to exercise choice and to influence schools to move toward traditional curriculums and the basics in order to gain marginal advantages for their children in an increasingly perilous economy (Dehli 1995). Such parents are small "fractions" but highly organized factions of the wider parental community. They exert a disproportionate influence on the direction of school change in ways that connect to the interests and experiences of their own section of the community, but marginalize the experiences and interests of other less fortunate ones. The market is an inequitable device for articulating school to community (Wells 1993). Better, deeper solutions need to be found for forging school-community relationships in ways that benefit all parents and their children, not just the favored few.

2. *Managerial relationships* presume that schools are rational organizations within a decentralized system. "Goals and priorities are set centrally for local interpretation and implementation. Decision making is viewed as a logical, problem-solving process" (Logan, Sacks, and Dempster 1994, p. 10). In its establishment of parent councils, school councils, and school development planning, the managerial approach is better at creating committees than at building communities. Managerialism alone is a poor solution for the permeable school. It grants untoward influence to atypical parents, diverts teachers' and principals' energies to procedural accountability more than to personal and emotional responsiveness, and has as yet shown no demonstrable benefits for student outcomes (Fullan 1993).

3. *Personal relationships* between teachers and parents, by contrast, concentrate on the most important interest that parents have in school: the achievement and well-being of their own children. This is where the emotional connection between school and community is strongest. Few parents wait anxiously for the new school development plan to arrive in the mail. But they are extremely keen to see reports about their own individual children. Yet the quality of information passed between school and home is often extremely poor. The change-oriented teachers in the project I described earlier complained extensively to one another that they wished they could tell the truth in their school reports. Why did they have to be evasive and euphemistic, or use precoded commands rather than words of their own? Why could they not tell the truth, the whole truth, in plain language, rather than in what Woods (1979) calls the "professionalism" of school reports. School reports often read more like insurance policies against potential parental criticism than means of strengthening home-school communication.

Parents' nights also have their communicative limitations. If a Martian were to drop in on many parents' nights, it would assume that their purpose is for parents and teachers to conspire against the absent child—discovering extra details, revealing hidden truths that the child had managed to keep separately contained in the insulated biospheres of home and school.

One of our project teachers challenged the prevailing practice of parents' night by organizing it so as to open up communication and understanding among teacher, parent, and child. The children in his class ran the parents' night themselves. Having been trained in interviewing skills, they brought a portfolio of work they had collected to share with their parents as a basis for dialogue. In this multicultural school, interviews could be conducted in the language of the home if preferred. The shortest of these grade 8 interviews took 45 minutes; the longest, 90 minutes. As in many cooperative learning settings, the teacher circulated around the interviews, advising, extending, supporting, and commenting wherever necessary or desired. This intriguing example illustrates what it means to go deeper in parent-teacher relationships: bringing the principles of openness, trust, risk-taking, and collaboration, which are commonly advocated for collegial relationships among teachers, to relationships among teachers, children, and their parents.

4. *Cultural relationships* are founded on principles of openness and collaboration developed collectively with groups of parents and others in the community as a whole. When engaged in change efforts, schools often decide upon their internal professional response first, then take a

managerial approach to informing their community later through meetings or newsletters. Teachers and principals often fear washing their "dirty linen" in public, believing it will provoke criticism and disrespect. Yet, counterintuitively, when schools involve communities with them in the uncertainties of change before the internal professional response has been decided, assistance, support, and understanding are much more likely to be forthcoming (Ainley 1993). Instead of schools seeing the community's involvement in change as tantamount to displaying dirty linen, it may be better to see successful change as entailing bringing the community into the school's "beautiful laundrette"—a communal place of work and conversation where the community does its washing together.

Connecting the school to the community through market relations or managerialism marginalizes many social groups who are unable to exercise choices or who, like many women, working-class people, and ethnic minorities, feel emotionally uncomfortable with councils, committees, and the other rationalized procedures of formal bureaucracies. Although we have known this for a long time (e.g., Young and Willmott 1957, Jackson 1968), we somehow continue to repeat the errors of history. As a way of going deeper in linking school and community, Mary Henry suggests pursuing a number of feminist principles that address the emotional aspects of these important relationships. These are:

- "A feminist view of school and community centers on the project of community building."
- "All decision-making policy and practice start from a notion of caring."
- "Leaders and workers, including parents and community people, act as coworkers, forming lateral relationships and cross relationships centered around the core technology of teaching and learning."
- "Professional educators are social workers as well as teachers: schools are responsive to social needs."

In this feminist view of working with parents and the community, "authentic casual contact or informal relations between parents and educators may be more important than formalized events" (Henry 1994, p. 18). This is not to say that committees, councils, and other formal structures do not have their place—only that without a solid and rich basis of positive community-school relationships, they will have little connection to the lives and concerns of those they claim to serve.

CONCLUSION

What is worth fighting for in our schools is ultimately meeting the learning needs of *all* students and caring for them effectively as well. While these educational needs are virtually timeless and universal (though they are not always properly met!), responding to them effectively in the complex postmodern age creates unique challenges. As our schools become more and more permeable, we must now consider how to take that struggle outside the walls of school into the wider community beyond and how to bring the community into the school to pursue this struggle with us. If our struggle is for the needs of all children and not just for the elite few, then markets and managerialism will help us little in our quest. They will merely strike a deeper emotional wedge between marginalized communities and the schools that claim to serve them.

Openness, informality, care, attentiveness, lateral working relationships, reciprocal collaboration, candid and vibrant dialogue, and a willingness to face uncertainty together are the basic ingredients of effective school-community collaboration, not merely the emotional icing that adorns it. They are the basic day-to-day foundation on which successful decision making, committee work, and general governance will depend. The struggle for positive educational change must now move beyond the school in order to enrich what goes on within it. It must fully engage our hearts as well as our minds. And it must extend emotionally beyond the internal management of schools themselves to the high-powered politics of educational reform and restructuring above them. City halls and school district offices should not be fortresses against feelings. This, I believe, is how we need to redefine educational change: broadening it beyond the school, and deepening it emotionally and morally within ourselves, in order to benefit the children that we teach.

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2

Schooling and Family in the Postmodern World

DAVID ELKIND

Every distinctive historical period is ordered by a set of unquestioned assumptions that the people of the epoch hold about themselves and about the natural world. This was certainly true for the *modern* era, which began with the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and ended with the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the Atomic Bomb. This era was built upon three seminal ideas, which nurtured the intellectual flowering of that historical epoch. These seminal beliefs were in *progress*, *universality*, and *regularity*. Every social institution, from government to commerce to science, embodied these convictions. Modern education, though it appeared late, was no exception, and it too gives abundant evidence of its modern heritage.

The tenets of modernity were never fully accepted, even by Renaissance and Enlightenment scholars, and challenges to these fundamental beliefs have gained momentum in the 20th century. Twentieth century realities—two World Wars, the Holocaust, the atomic bomb, and the degradation of the environment—have undermined faith in human progress and the belief that society evolves in a positive direction so as to improve the lot of all individuals. Likewise, especially in the social sciences, we have come to recognize that universality is much less the rule in the physical world than in the human world. The laws of learning, for example, are no longer regarded as universal, applicable to all individuals and all species. Finally, in many different disciplines, there is a new acceptance of the irregular or chaotic as a legitimate expression of nature. Some phenomena, like the weather, are clearly inherently irregular.

Collectively, challenges to the foundation beliefs of modernity, which are in keeping with the new social and scientific realities of the last half of the 20th century, have been called *postmodernism*. Postmodernity stresses *difference* as much as progress, *particularity* as opposed to universality, and *irregularity* in contrast with regularity. It is not that postmodernists deny the existence of progress, universality, and regularity, but they do contest the notion that these concepts are applicable to all of reality. It should be noted that there are as many postmodernities as there are postmodern writers. This fact is, in itself, a reflection of the postmodern emphasis upon difference, particularity, and irregularity.

Postmodern ideas are bringing about tectonic changes in many scientific disciplines, as well as in mathematics, industry, and the arts They are also finding their way into education, which, however haltingly, is itself becoming postmodern. However, the transformation of schools, unlike other social institutions, has been, in part at least, mediated by changes in the family. Therefore, in chronicling the movement from the modern to the postmodern in education, it is necessary to distinguish between those changes attributable to postmodernity in general and those that came about as a direct response to changes in the family. This chapter, therefore, shows how the shift from modern to postmodern education reflects changes in the family as well as in the guiding beliefs of the larger society.

The Modern Era

Modern Education and the Tenets of Modernity

The modern era in education was ushered in by the philosophical ideas of John Locke (1692/1930) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1911), and by innovative practitioners such as Heinrich Pestalozzi (Green 1914) and Friedrich Froebel (1893). In the United States, modern education began in the middle of the 19th century with the provision of free public education for all children. The first public schools were modeled after the Latin Schools, which had long served the children of the wealthy. Such schools were organized according to the classical conception of education, which stressed learning Latin and Greek as a means of training the mind. The classical conception of education also held to the pre-enlightenment view that knowledge comes from books, not from experience and experimentation.

John Dewey (1938) brought American public education fully into the modern era at the turn of the century. He argued for a "progressive" pedagogy in which the student was an active participant rather than a passive recipient. Dewey saw education as interactive, as growing out of the child's ever-widening experience and increasingly complex representation of that experience. He also regarded education, learning through doing, as universal and appropriate for all children. Finally, Dewey thought of education as regular, as following a predictable sequence in the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and values.

The tenets of modernity manifested themselves in many different facets of education. Consider the belief in progress. The curriculum was organized hierarchically from the simple to the complex, from the concrete to the abstract, on the assumption that that was the normal path of intellectual progress. In a like manner, the age grading of the curriculum presumed a stepwise, regular increase in students' skills, knowledge, and values. Progress also became the criterion of individual success and failure. A child who did not progress in step with peers was deemed defective in some way.

Education in the modern era also manifested the belief in universality. Textbooks, for example, made little or no provision for children who mastered material at different rates or who might be able to learn material more easily if it were presented in a nonlinear fashion. Nor were there many, if any, story characters who would be recognizable to minority children or settings that might look familiar to children living in such places as, say, New Mexico, Alaska, or Hawaii. Modern textbooks presupposed a universal, Anglo-American child with whom all children could (and should) identify.

Regularity was also reflected in much of modern pedagogical practice. Educational achievement was assumed to follow a normal curve of probability with most children attaining near the mean and fewer and fewer scoring further and further away from the norm. Learning was also assumed to be regular and to follow prescribed principles such as the "law of effect." Children who did not learn in the expected way, according to the rules, were assumed to have some form of learning defect, and little attention was given to the irregularities in learning unique to children with special needs.

In these and many other ways, modern education—until the 1960s when postmodern influences began to take hold—strongly embraced the concepts of progress, universality, and regularity.

The Modern Nuclear Family and Modern Education

The modern nuclear family was characterized by a clear separation between the home and the workplace, between children and adults, and between people's public and private lives. At that time, most work was done in factories, and there was often animosity between labor and management. Unions were powerful. The workplace was thus regarded as hard and unforgiving, whereas the home was considered warm and nurturing or, as Christopher Lasch (1977) termed it, *A Haven in a Heartless World*. The home was "where the heart was" and where people went for nurturing, emotional support, and relief from the pressures of factory life.

In the modern nuclear family, a well-maintained distance was kept between adults and children. With the introduction of universal public education, children and adolescents were defined in a way that clearly distinguished them from adults, namely, as *students*. This distinction was emphasized by dressing children differently than adults, by the passage of child labor laws that recognized children's physical and intellectual limitations, and by the compulsory education laws that officially designated the childhood and adolescent years as those devoted to schooling. The separation between children and adults was most evident in the extent to which there was unilateral respect between adults and children. In a system of unilateral respect, the adult lays down the rules and children abide by them.

Finally, in the nuclear family there was a solid wall separating private and public life. People did not air their "dirty laundry" in public. A great emphasis was placed upon the family's outward demonstration of harmony and affection regardless of any animosity or conflict actually present within the home. Protection of one's private life was valued for public figures as well. The private lives of presidents or members of Congress, for example, were not intruded upon. Though this separation did not hold for actors and actresses, the attention given their private lives was often for publicity purposes. In most cases, the boundaries between public and private lives were respected.

Similar divisions held for the modern nuclear school. There was, first of all, a marked physical difference between home and school. Modern schools were often square, two-story brick edifices, usually with paved school yards. Bells sounded the beginning and end of the school day as well as lunchtime and special events. Inside the classroom, rows of wooden desks, chalkboards, and other learning materials were more like an assembly line than a living room. Indeed, the modern nuclear school resembled the factory more than the home. This was, in part at least, an intentional way of preparing children for factory life.

At the time, there was also a great emphasis upon the difference between teaching and parenting. Teachers were expected to teach but not parent and parents were expected to rear their children but not to teach. It was believed that if either the teacher or the parent tried to play both roles it would only confuse the child. There were parent/teacher organizations, but these served largely social functions and made no effort to involve parents in school governance or as teacher's aides. Indeed, such activities would have been looked upon as an infringement on the separation and role differentiation between home and school.

Finally, there was also a marked difference between what parents were to instill in children and what teachers were to inculcate. Parents were expected to teach children manners, morals, and respect for adults. Teachers, on the other hand, were responsible for instructing children in the three R's as well as in the knowledge, values, and skills they would need in the workplace. The modern nuclear school was, therefore, both psychologically and physically, a world apart from the home life of children. It was believed that a clear separation between school life and home life was healthiest and most conducive to efficient and effective child rearing and education.

Modern Family Sentiments, Values, and Perceptions and Modern Education

The modern nuclear family's unique set of sentiments, values, and perceptions were also echoed in what might, therefore, be called the modern nuclear school.

Sentiments. The sentiments of the modern family were those of romantic love, maternal love, and domesticity. Romantic love was the idea that there was one and only one person in the whole world made for us. Once we met that person, we would fall in love, marry, and live happily ever after. The sentiment of romantic love was one reason couples "saved themselves" for their marital partners. It assumed a lifelong commitment to the relationship and abhorrence of divorce as an admission that the marriage was not made in heaven.

Maternal love was a sentiment based on the notion that mothers had an instinctive need to love and care for their children. The sentiment of maternal love was an extension of Darwinian theory to the human family. After much controversy, Darwin's ideas regarding human's animal ancestry became widely accepted. Animal behavior became a model for human behavior. The maternal instinct could be observed in animals, and was, therefore, presumed to hold true for human mothers. Although the evidence for human instincts is much weaker than for animals, belief in the maternal instinct became widespread.

Domesticity, the belief that the home should be each family member's primary allegiance, was the third sentiment of the modern family. According to this sentiment, it was the mother's job to nurture and care for the emotional needs of all family members and to organize a comfortable, livable home. Up until about the turn of the century, domesticity provided some creative outlets for mothers, who engaged in quilt making, weaving, needlepoint, canning, and so on. However, all that vanished with the 20th century Home Economics Movement. The movement's spokesperson, Betty Crocker, urged mothers to buy "Wonder Bread™"; vacuum-packed coffee; mass-produced jams, jellies, and relishes; and machine-made quilts. Increasingly, mothers became consumers rather than creators of domestic products.

Values. Although we often think of such virtues as honesty, thrift, fidelity, hard work, and responsibility as family values, they are, in fact, social, cultural, and religious values. While these values are indeed transmitted by parents, they do not originate in the family. For a value to be considered a family value, it must grow out of family sentiments. In the case of the nuclear family, the value of togetherness was the natural product of the combination of romantic love, maternal love, and domesticity. The essence of the value of *togetherness* is that the family must be placed ahead of self and that doing things for and with the family must take precedence over doing things for one's self and with friends.

Perceptions. The nuclear family's perceptions were in keeping with its sentiments and value. Parents were perceived as *intuitively* knowledgeable about childrearing. Modern writers of books for parents such as Donald Winnicot (1987) and Benjamin Spock (1968) told parents they did not have to go to college or read thick books to succeed as parents.

They had only to use their common sense and natural inclinations to be "good enough" parents.

Children in the modern age were regarded as *innocent* and in need of parental nurturance, social and moral training, and protection. Childhood itself was seen as a very precious time that should be cherished and protected. Adolescents were perceived as *immature* and very much in need of limits, guidance, and support from adults. Adolescents were expected to get into minor difficulties as they challenged authority and moved toward independence.

These sentiments, values, and perceptions were also found in the modern nuclear school. For example, the school forms children had to fill out made no provision for children of divorced or single parents, or for children of remarried or blended families. Schools took for granted the sentiment of romantic love and the related myth that couples would not separate or divorce. Kindergarten was only a half-day affair and was, in most states, not compulsory. *Kindergarten was more like home than school*. It was looked upon as a way of helping children make the transition from home to school. Kindergarten children did arts and crafts, sang songs, and engaged in dramatic play. These practices reflected the sentiment of maternal love, and the belief that young children are best cared for by their mothers in their own homes.

Domesticity was reinforced in the modern nuclear school. There was a clear gender separation in classes at the junior and senior high school levels. Boys took machine shop, wood shop, printing, and mechanical drawing while girls took sewing, typing, and shorthand.

The value of togetherness was also incorporated into the modern nuclear school under the guise of *social adjustment*. Social adjustment, the child's ability to get along with other children and adults, was the dimension along which psychological health and illness were assessed. Presumably, children reared in nuclear homes and indoctrinated with the value of togetherness would be socially oriented and well adjusted. Those who were not were considered maladjusted.

Nuclear family perceptions about parents, children, and adolescents were also embedded in nuclear school pedagogy. Teachers, for example, were assumed to be intuitively knowledgeable about the curriculum and only in need of information about the nature of child development. The ill-fated "child study movement" at the turn of the century was but one example of the efforts to involve teachers in learning more about the cognitive, social, and emotional growth of children.

Schools supported and reinforced the nuclear family perception of childhood innocence. Literature for children was carefully screened to ensure that it contained nothing unseemly. Textbook materials were uniformly positive and left out any facts that might sully the reputation of America or its founders. For example, Native Americans were most often portrayed as savages who committed violent acts against the peaceful settlers. No mention was made of events such as the massacre of the Ogala Sioux at The Battle of Wounded Knee. Nor were there any stories about how ruthless Columbus and later explorers were to the native inhabitants of the new world. History and social studies were sanitized to protect the innocent.

Junior high and high schools also reinforced the nuclear family perception of adolescent immaturity. Many adult-organized activities for young people reflected the belief that adolescents needed adult guidance and supervision. Many high schools provided supervised social activities for adolescents, such as weekly dances. After-school clubs run by teachers offered instruction and coaching in subjects as diverse as debating and gardening. Rules were strictly enforced, and truancy officers often went to the homes of students absent without due notification or cause.

Thus, in many different ways, the modern nuclear school reflected not only the basic tenets of modernity but also the sentiments, values, and perceptions of the modern nuclear family.

THE POSTMODERN ERA

THE TENETS OF POSTMODERNITY AND POSTMODERN EDUCATION

Although the postmodern movement began growing a century or so ago, it only came into prominence after the middle of this century. With regard to education, many postmodern ideas were introduced by educators such as Maria Montessori(1912/1964) and Jean Piaget (1950) who wrote and worked in the modern era. But it was only in the '60s and '70s that the tenets of postmodernity—difference, particularity, and irregularity—began to dictate educational practice.

Consider the postmodern notion of difference. New provisions for children with special needs reflect this notion. In the modern era, few, if any, accommodations were made for such children. Today, schools have created special curricular programs and made physical changes within buildings to accommodate children with special needs. More attention is also being given to gifted and talented students who were often overlooked when learning was thought to follow a universal progression.

Increasing recognition of the fact that children do not all progress at the same rate developmentally has even led some communities to use multi-age grouping during the early years of schooling. Such grouping acknowledges the fact that mental growth is most rapid and individual differences in growth rate most pronounced when children are between ages 5–7.

Contemporary (permeable) schools also pay more attention to the particular and less to the universal. For example, there is increasing appreciation of the fact that little transfer occurs from one learning activity to another and learning is most often domain specific. Piaget (1950) made this point over and over again in his many books. He repeatedly emphasized that the attainment of a particular level of reasoning ability did not mean that the child automatically understood everything at that level. On the contrary, each subject matter (e.g., space, time, number, and geometry) poses its own problems and has to be mastered in its own way. Learning also has an individual dimension, and educators have a greater appreciation of individual learning styles. Today schools recognize that what is a distraction to one child may be a necessary stimulus for another.

As for regularity, the new recognition of non-test methods of assessment such as projects, portfolios, and performances speaks to the realization that children express learning achievements in unique ways that are irregular and cannot be captured by standardized tests. Likewise, children may attack problems in different ways and still arrive at comparable solutions. At a broader level, it could even be argued that the classroom itself is a chaotic phenomenon. Each classroom meeting is a nonreplicable experiment. Neither the teacher nor the children are the same on one day as the day before. This does not mean that we cannot study classroom phenomena, but only that we have to study them as chaotic, rather than regular, occurrences.

In addition to these changes, which mirror the overall thrust of postmodernism, other changes in the school are direct reflections of the postmodern permeable family's sentiments, values, and perceptions.

THE POSTMODERN PERMEABLE FAMILY AND POSTMODERN EDUCATION

American society has been permanently altered by many dramatic changes that have taken place, particularly during the 1960s: the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, the Kennedy Assassination, Watergate, the Vietnam War, and the sexual revolution. Part of that alteration was the metamorphosis of the modern nuclear family into the postmodern permeable family. The permeable family includes a variety of kinship patterns, including nuclear, two working parent, single parent, adoptive, and remarried families. Although the nuclear family, when it is psychologically sound, may be the least stressful configuration, children can be reared successfully in all the different family configurations, given the right circumstances.

In the permeable family, as the name implies, the clear boundaries between home and workplace, between children and adults, and between private and public lives have become porous. The permeable family and the outside world interact in many more ways than did the nuclear family. Television certainly played a part in making the family more responsive to the outside world, but it was far from the only contributor to postmodern permeability.

Consider first the impact of mothers entering the workforce. Today, more than 60 percent of mothers with children under the age of 6 work full- or part-time. More than 30 million people, including many mothers, work at home either part- of full-time thanks to computers, modems, and fax machines. Other working mothers have their children close to them while they work. More than 4,000 industries and organizations nationwide have childcare centers on site. So in the postmodern world, the boundary between workplace and home has become blurred.

The clear division between children and adults that marked the modern nuclear family has become much less distinct in the postmodern world as well. Minorities' and women's efforts to get equal rights for themselves were inadvertently extended to children and youth. Protecting children's rights became more important than protecting children. Regarding children as equal with respect to rights led to the belief that they were equal in all ways and were, in effect, little adults. Children are now dressed like adults; often engage, from an early age, in the same sports as adults; and are even expected, with some training, to be able to defend themselves against adults who would do them harm.

Finally, the cherished boundary between private and public lives, which was so much a part of the nuclear family, has all but disappeared. A number of television talk show hosts do their best to reveal the seamiest and most vile aspects of what goes on within some families behind closed doors. Television not only comes into our homes, it places us into other people's homes and lives. In the modern era, no reporter would have dared to report on the private life of the President of the United States. Today, however, a reporter might win a Pulitzer Prize for searching out public figures' private indiscretions.

Some of the walls between home and school and home and larger society have also become more porous in the postmodern permeable school. With the advent of home computers, modems, and fax machines, communication between home and school has become much more open-ended. Teachers can e-mail parents and students and vice versa. With televisions and computers in homes and schools, the physical differences between the home and school have become much less distinctive. The difference between schools and childcare facilities has also become more difficult to discern. The full-day kindergarten, for example, is a child care, not an educational, initiative. It came about because parents needed full-day childcare that was affordable, accessible, and high quality.

A similar breakdown of boundaries has also occurred in the schools when it comes to unilateral respect, that is, children abiding by teacher-made rules. *Many children come to school today expecting to relate to teachers as equals.* Some private school headmasters say that when a child is disciplined they do not see the child's parents in the office, but rather the family lawyer.

Finally, the division of responsibilities between teachers and parents, which was fundamental to the nuclear school, is no longer evidenced in the postmodern permeable school. In today's world, schools are expected to offer sex and drug education, and many provide instruction in abuse prevention as well. Schools today are also often expected to teach morals and character. Some postmodern school systems even involve parents in school governance. Many welcome parents and even require them to serve as teachers' aides for a prescribed number of days each year. *More generally, parents are now expected to serve as educational resources for their children and to work cooperatively with teachers.*

Postmodern Sentiments, Values, and Perceptions and Postmodern Education

The sentiments, values, and perceptions of the postmodern permeable family have also made schools permeable.

Sentiments. In the permeable family, the sentiment of romantic love has given way to the sentiment of consensual love. With the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the social acceptance of premarital sex, saving one's self for one's fated partner—the linchpin of romantic love—was lost. Young people now have sexual relations with partners whom they have no intention of marrying. Sexual relations are entered into by mutual consent and without a lifelong commitment. The sentiment of consensual love has even extended to marriage, and young people today marry with the awareness and acceptance that a divorce might be in their future.

The nuclear sentiment of maternal love has also been transformed by the social reality of working mothers. The new sentiment of *shared parenting* has replaced the sentiment of maternal love. Today, parenting is shared between mother and father, as well as with non-familial and out-of-home caregivers. It is certainly true, of course, that, despite this changed sentiment, mothers still do the king's share of childrearing and homemaking. Nonetheless, fathers do more today than in the modern era, and out-of-home care is more available than in the past.

With the advent of television, inexpensive cars, superhighways, and jet air travel, families have become much more involved with the external world than during modern times. Accordingly, the third sentiment of the postmodern family is *urbanity* as the breakdown of the boundaries between home and workplace, public and private life, and child and adult are much more fluid than during the modern era. The universality of cars, of jet travel, and of fast-food eateries has moved much of family life outside the home, while television and the Internet have brought the world into our living rooms.

Values. In keeping with the new sentiments of the permeable family, a new value has emerged. This new value is *autonomy*, which emphasizes the importance of family members following their own pursuits and putting individual trajectories before the interests of the family. In the modern family where togetherness reigned, having meals together was placed above individual desires and preferences. Today, soccer practice, music lessons, and business meetings take precedence over sharing meals. If the nuclear home was a haven, the permeable family is more like a busy railway station with people coming in for rest and nurturance before moving out on another track.

Perceptions. The perception of parents in the permeable family reflects the new sentiments and values. Parenting is now viewed as a learned technique rather than an intuitive ability. Postmodern writers emphasize the "How To" for parents and say very little about the "How Do." For example, these writers tell parents how to talk to children but say nothing about the importance of developmental stages in how children use and comprehend language. Haim Ginott (1965), Thomas Gordon (1989), and other Postmodern advice givers for parents place great emphasis on not evaluating children, but they do not hesitate to evaluate parents and teachers and to tell them what they are doing wrong and how to do it right.

Children, in turn, are now seen as *competent*, ready and able to deal with all of life's vicissitudes. This new perception of children is not the result of some new, revolutionary research findings. On the contrary, it is a direct response to the postmodern parents' need to have competent children. Postmodern parents need children who can cope with divorce, who can deal with out-of-home childcare from an early age, and who will be left unfazed by all the violence, sexual activity, and misleading advertising they see on television. The title of the popular movie *Home Alone* is a nice metaphor for the postmodern, competent child. Such a child is believed to be able to manage quite well without parents, and even outwit a couple of bungling adult thieves.

The perception of adolescent immaturity is no longer a fitting sequel for the image of childhood competence. Accordingly, today, adolescents are seen as *sophisticated*, as quite well informed about drugs, sex, AIDS, STDs, and modern technology. This new perception is again mirrored by the media's portrayal of teenagers as worldly, sexually active, and knowledgeable about drugs. This perception of youthful sophistication is echoed in the lyrics of many rock groups. Parents and teenagers have adopted this new perception of adolescent sophistication and often behave accordingly.

These new sentiments, values, and perceptions have been incorporated into our schools, which are now more permeable than nuclear. The sentiment of consensual love, for example, has contributed to the high divorce rate in America today. Schools now provide forms that reflect the existence of many different family kinship arrangements. The provision of sex education (and, in some high schools, the distribution of condoms) is but another example of how schools now incorporate and respond to the reality of consensual love in our society.

Shared parenting is also evident in our schools. Moral and character education have been shifted to the schools. And schools now provide before- and after-school childcare in direct response to the movement of mothers into the workforce and the need for quality childcare. Unfortunately, shared parenting also means that many teachers must deal with the feelings and emotions of children who have not been well parented, and many caught in battles between divorced parents. Other children are simply over-programmed and stressed out. In the permeable school, teachers must provide much more in the way of emotional support and parenting than was true in the nuclear school.

The sentiment of urbanity is also part of the postmodern permeable school. It shows up in many different ways. Schools now provide multicultural instruction and try to acquaint children with other cultures. Thanks to the computer and the Internet, children can now have e-mail pals all over the world. And schools now have more honest, more gender- and minority-fair curriculums. For example, the cruel treatment of Native Americans by explorers, by the army, and by settlers is now being more honestly portrayed than in the modern curriculums. Likewise, more attention is being paid to the scientific, literary, and social contributions of minority group members and women.

The postmodern perception of parenting as technique has also affected the perception of teaching. Unfortunately, many who train teachers now look upon teaching as mainly a matter of acquiring certain knowledge and skills, such as those of classroom management. Perhaps the ultimate expression of teaching as technique are the so-called teacher-proof curriculums. Such curriculums, which provide detailed, day-to-day lesson plans, deprive teachers of individual input. These curriculums denigrate teaching to the level of a menial, robotic activity.

While some teaching techniques are clearly valuable, the focus upon technique too often excludes children's developmental nature and teachers' professional talents.

The postmodern perception of child competence is also now incorporated into many school practices. Perhaps the most glaring negative effect of this new perception is the expectation that all children entering 1st grade will know their letters and numbers. Children who do not are likely to be held back or put into a transition class. This new expectation of competence comes from the fact that some 85 percent of children entering 1st grade have had some early childhood educational experience. Administrators expect, therefore, that this experience will have provided them with basic skills. This has led to downward pressure on the curriculum. Expecting kindergarten children to do homework is one example. Teaching decimal fractions in 4th grade rather than 6th as was done in the past is another.

Junior high, middle, and high schools now look upon teenagers as sophisticated and knowledgeable about drugs, sex, and the world in general. As a consequence, postmodern permeable secondary schools provide fewer adult-organized activities than did the modern nuclear high school. Many high school students work in fast-food establishments and, because few contribute to their family budget, have the largest percentage of disposable income of any age group. This money often gets spent on clothing, music, and rock concerts. Some schools even cut down on the amount of homework they assign because of students' heavy non-school workload. Students, presumably, are to be the judge of how much, or how little, they are to work.

* * *

In this chapter, I have argued that the transformation of our society from modern to postmodern, and of our families from nuclear to permeable, has been brought about by major changes in our schools, quite independent of any concerted reform efforts. Some of these changes have had positive effects, while others have had less fortunate consequences.

The postmodern appreciation of difference, particularity, and irregularity has yielded provisions for children with special needs; multicultural, gender-, and minority-fair curriculums; as well as programs for gifted and talented students. Permeable family sentiments have contributed to the recognition and acceptance of multiple family patterns, to the provision of many more childcare services, and to a new honesty and breadth in the curriculum. These are all positive changes.

On the negative side, the perception of teaching as technique has, in some communities, led to the denigration of this professional activity. In a like manner, the postmodern perception of child competence has put downward pressure on the curriculum and is, in part at least, responsible for the testing and labeling of children at much too young an age. The perception of adolescent sophistication has also led schools to cut back on the adult-organized activities they provide for young people.

There are then both positive and negative features to modern and postmodern pedagogy. One characteristic of postmodernism is pastiche, the mixture of styles and patterns from different historical periods. Perhaps the most effective direction for educational innovation is an educational pastiche that combines the best of modern and postmodern pedagogy. Developmentally appropriate practice (really a modern idea) might well be combined with the postmodern emphasis on difference and particularity. This would lead to a new concern for how different learning styles play out developmentally. Are there *developmental styles*? In a similar manner, the modern concern with intuition might be combined with the postmodern notion of technique, resulting in *creative teaching*, which is technique informed by intuition. Additionally, one might join together the modern emphasis upon social adjustment with the postmodern emphasis upon self-esteem. Combined, these two orientations might lead to a new emphasis on *interpersonal competence* reflecting both high self-esteem and social sensitivity.

These are but a few of the many possible ways the best of modern education might be combined with the best of postmodern pedagogy. This type of integration is the most productive direction for true and lasting educational innovation; and can result in a truly vital education that speaks to the developmental needs of children, the professional needs of teachers, and the child-rearing needs of parents.

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3

Equity Lessons from Detracking Schools

JEANNIE OAKES, AMY STUART WELLS, SUSAN YONEZAWA, KAREN RAY

CHANGE AGENTRY AND THE QUEST FOR EQUITY

Many educators choose to teach because they believe in the power of equal educational opportunity, and they commit their professional lives to providing better life chances to disadvantaged children. Even so, the cultural gap between the rhetoric of equal opportunity and the reality of the way society constructs opportunity may be most visible in public schools, whose mission is to provide equal education. Currently, educators are under enormous pressure to make systemic reforms and restructure schools so that all students will reach high academic standards. This pressure resonates with the cultural ideal that schools serve all children well. Yet this policy exists side by side with persistent inequalities along race and social class lines as low-income students and students of color experience fewer resources and less powerful learning environments—conditions about which current policy says little.

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This chapter presents findings from 10 racially mixed schools where individuals, as change agents, took the call to restructure their schools as a mandate to equalize schooling. The findings from these schools suggest strongly that equity-minded school reforms—those that are fundamentally redistributional across race and social class lines—face normative and political obstacles. These arise as educators and parents bent on reform confront the persistent American dilemma of inequality as it rears its head under the contemporary rubric of school restructuring (Myrdal 1944).[1] Even the most reform-minded educators are ill-prepared to deal with what ensues. As Hochschild (1984) explains, most educational reform literature is grounded in the premise that discriminatory beliefs and practices are at odds with basic American values and, if given the oportunity, Americans will naturally move away from past racist practices. However, the history of equity-minded reformers over the past three decades, and the struggles faced by the individuals introducing change in the 10 schools we studied, suggest that this rarely happens.

Social Justice and Detracking in 10 Schools

In the last decade, growing numbers of educators across the nation have come face-to-face with the pedagogical, moral, and ethical problems associated with tracking or ability grouping. They have been influenced by research showing the harmful effects of tracking on the achievement of low-track students, as well as by studies demonstrating that race and class play a major role in students' track placements. Schools far more often judge African-American and Latino students as having learning deficits and limited potential (sometimes, regardless of their prior achievement) and place these students disproportionately in low-track, remedial programs. Once placed, these students do not learn as much as comparably skilled students in heterogeneous classes; and they have less access than other students to knowledge, powerful learning environments, and resources. Thus, school tracking practices create racially separate programs that provide minority children with restricted educational opportunities and outcomes (Oakes 1985, 1990, 1995; Oakes and Guiton 1995; Welner and Oakes 1996).

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[1] While Myrdal focused on racial discrimination and inequality in the United States, we extend this idea to include social class, gender, and sexual preference.

A three-year longitudinal case study research project, Beyond Sorting and Stratification, followed the progress of 10 racially and socioeconomically mixed secondary schools that have been undertaking "detracking" reforms, largely as a part of educators' efforts to close the gap between the rhetoric of equal opportunity and social inequality at the schools. (The names of schools and school officials used in this chapter have been invented, in interest of confidentiality.) Our interdisciplinary research team used qualitative methods to examine changes in school organization, grouping practices, and classroom pedagogy—what we call the technical aspects of these reforms. We also investigated the way the schools tackle well-established school and community norms and political practices that legitimize and support tracking as a "common sense" approach to educating students.

The 10 schools vary in size from more than 3,000 to less then 500 students. The schools are widely dispersed geographically, with one school in the Northeast, three in the Midwest, one in the South, two in the Northwest, and three in various regions of California. The schools enrolled quite different mixes of white, African-American, Latino, Native American/Alaska Native, and/or Asian students. We visited each of these 10 schools three times over two years. Data collection during our site visits consisted of in-depth, semi-structured tape-recorded interviews with administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community leaders, including school board members. We also observed classrooms and meetings of faculties, parent groups, and school boards. We have reviewed documents and written field notes about our observations within the schools and the communities. Data have been compiled in extensive single case studies that form the basis of our cross-case analyses.[2]

In this chapter, we find patterns among the schools. However, the stories we uncovered were unique to each place. The course that individuals took to effect change and the response to their efforts were deeply affected by the local community culture and politics, as well as national patterns of race, social class, and gender. In the sections that follow, we describe these patterns and the rich variation among the schools' experiences.

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[2] For a full description of this study and its methodology, see Oakes and Wells 1995.

A Commitment to Social Justice

In each of the 10 schools, educators (and, in some places, community members) engaged in a critical scrutiny of school regularities and the part schooling plays in social inequality. These individuals were so bothered by the gap they found between the ideals and reality of schooling that they could no longer continue with the status quo.

For example, at Union High School, a former school board member expressed the district's equity intentions when it initiated plans for the new, consolidated school:

> I guess we just had a feeling that all kids could learn given the right opportunities, that really there weren't great differences in intellect between rich kids and poor kids, or it was just a matter of exposure.

Similarly, educators at highly regarded Liberty High School chafed at the realization that, for all its national merit scholars and graduates at elite universities, the school's record of failure with low-income students of color was equally impressive. As Liberty principal Evan Payne put it, "If you're in the 'haves' group, it's one of the best places in America to go to high school. If you're in the 'have nots,' it's like a lot of places—it's full of failure (Cooper 1995, p. 25).

Grant High School's reform was also driven by a concern for equity:

> The teachers I most connect with are the ones who really sense that we can't afford to waste anybody. We just can't afford to say that we have this group of kids [the high achievers] that will carry us. You know, they'll be our leaders. . . . I'm convinced we don't live in a world like that anymore. We can't afford to lose those kids.

Tracking as a Structural Barrier to Equity

At each of these schools, individuals implementing change came to see tracking as a major impediment to their equity goals. At Rollinghills Middle School, for example, Assistant Principal Jane Griffen counseled the most alienated youngsters, and her work often took her to the South Side homes of bused-in African-American students (Williams 1995). Because Griffen believed that these students' inferior opportunities at school were at the root of most discipline problems, she chafed at white parents' efforts to exclude black students from the higher level classes:

> Part of my responsibility is to be respectful, but I have a hard time dealing with a racist. . . . Sometimes I want to say [to white parents] . . . you dare to sit there and put down children who may not have all the advantages that your child has but who are here working despite their disadvantages. You're sitting here telling me that they are not worthy to be in class with your child. This is a real personal issue with me.

Bearfield Middle School's principal made clear his awareness that tracking limits students access to knowledge,

> You know when you don't teach a kid anything but two plus two is four, then you give him a test and he has no idea why the one train doesn't catch the other train, we think that he's stupid. He's not stupid. Who the hell are we to decide who gets access to what learning?

and that tracking has long-term social effects:

> Detracking issues are really the salvation of America. I mean, we can't build a high, medium, and low America. . . . I mean we really can't say to a kid in 2nd grade, "You've been elected to low America. We're not going to give you access to learning, as we do to everybody else."

A Bearfield teacher explained that white parents' resistance to eliminating honors is grounded in norms about race. "Quite frankly, I think the reason we have honors is parental pressure. It's a racial issue. An honors group is a white group."

In the wake of the 1992 Rodney King verdict and civil disturbance, Grant's students (several states away) targeted segregated classes as one of the major problems at the school. Reform-minded teachers and student leaders used this very public discussion about the racial composition of honors and regular classes as a mandate to detrack the school.

While we've used examples from only a few schools as illustrations, we found that a commitment to social justice lay behind the detracking efforts at all 10 sites.

THE EASIEST PART: INVENTING NEW STRUCTURES

Within three years of Principal Evan Payne's arrival at Liberty High School, he and a cadre of strong teacher leaders had made considerable progress toward detracking. The schools' entire 9th grade class was enrolled in heterogeneous two-hour English/history "cores" taught by partnered teachers, and many 9th grade college-prep math classes were heterogeneous. Each of the cores was attached to one of the seven Liberty High School "families" composed of an administrator, counselor, and secretary. This arrangement—spurred in part by Liberty's involvement with the Coalition of Essential Schools—provided a greater degree of connectedness for the students and teachers. Students who would have traditionally been placed in a low-track English class because of low scores on the state's reading and writing proficiency exam were assigned to an English "back-up" class designed to support learning in the core English classes.

Four tangible changes in the allocation of school resources, the schedule, and registration practices made Liberty's 9th grade detracking possible: "buying down" class sizes to 20 students; providing "back-up" classes with tutoring as a way to provide lower achieving students with a double dose of instruction; arranging common planning time for teacher teams who were sharing "core" classes; and shifting from students' "self-scheduling" their classes to counselors deliberately composing balanced sections of the core. Professional development promised to boost teachers' knowledge and skills around thematic curriculum that provided the English and social studies departments with opportunities to collaborate. All of these changes were designed to support Liberty's goal of providing each of its 9th graders with access to high-quality, high-status, heterogeneous courses.

Like the educators at Liberty High School, the individuals pioneering change in each of the 10 schools seized opportunities provided by a wide range of current reforms to help them change their schools to serve low-income, non-white students in better ways. Two joined the Coalition of Essential Schools, two affiliated with networks of middle schools implementing Carnegie's *Turning Points* reforms, and two became part of their states' project providing funding for restructuring schools. Two others had been charged by their districts to develop special magnet programs, and two had reorganized as a consequence of district consolidation. Individuals introducing change used these more comprehensive reform contexts as a framework for altering tracking.

The ultimate goal at each of the schools was to provide greater access and academic achievement for low-track (disproportionately minority) students, while maintaining quality for traditionally high-achieving (mostly white) students. Each of the schools approached this ambitious goal by making changes in basic school structures, believing that such changes would lead to fundamental changes in curriculum, instruction, and learning in heterogeneous classes. In addition to reducing or eliminating the number of track levels in academic subjects at various grade levels, the schools did such things as create new schedules; reorganize teachers into teams; balance class enrollments; permit students to double-up classes in particular subjects or take summer classes that allowed them to "jump" to a higher track; provide all students access to honors programs; and create opportunities for students to get extra help to master the standard curriculum, for example, in "back-up" classes.

In addition to these organizational changes, some teachers at each of the schools adopted new classroom strategies they believed would permit students to show their ability in previously unrecognized ways—Socratic Seminars, experiential curriculum—such as project-based science and interactive math, reduced use of textbooks, and cooperative small group learning. Other teachers developed assignments that would challenge students of varying ability levels. Some invented new assessment techniques to even the playing field in heterogeneous classes. Many developed more multicultural curriculums, in an effort to make knowledge more accessible to all students.

CHALLENGING NORMATIVE REGULARITIES

The strongest force behind Bearfield Middle School's detracking efforts is its charismatic principal, Ben McCall, formerly the principal at the community's all-white junior high school. McCall worked diligently and skillfully to convince his faculty that detracking (and the team structures and multicultural curriculum that he thought necessary to support it) was key to pursuing his commitment to equality in their newly consolidated, racially mixed community. But even for McCall, the idea that detracking was a "sensible" reform did not come easily. As McCall described his conversion from a "tracker" to a "detracker," it became clear that adopting this reform challenged deeply felt convictions about how schooling should proceed:

> I really liked [a former district administrator], but she and I were at totally different ends of the spectrum. She was anti-grouping and tracking, and I was a tracker and a grouper. I was just finishing my degree so I was at [the university] all the time. She just laid all this research on me that was anti-tracking, and I said "Well, where's the research on my side of the fence?" She said, "Ben, there isn't any." . . . I looked one whole weekend at [the university library] and I couldn't find anything to support it. Then [the administrator]

> and I went out to lunch that lasted till about six o'clock at night. She was right and I was wrong. When the light finally went on it was like . . . I was wrong.

None of the 10 schools found its organizational and instructional changes easy to implement. The major difficulty, however, did not stem from the technical challenges these changes presented. Of course, there were some technical glitches along the way. But far more difficult than these were the challenges these reforms presented to educators' and communities' conventional wisdom about what secondary students are and what good schools should be. Because these changes fundamentally altered the way the schools allocated their most precious resources—including time, teachers, materials, and high-achieving students—they challenged traditional ways of thinking about "merit" and which students "deserve" the best that schools have to offer.

At each of the 10 schools, change agents grappled with conventional norms that prevented them and others from having high expectations for all students, and from creating structures that press all students toward high levels of academic competence. Each school's reform effort was jeopardized, not only by those who actively resisted reform, but also by well-intentioned educators whose everyday "common sense" actions unwittingly reinforced and reconstructed the logic behind traditional grouping practices (Wells and Serna 1996). In the process of implementing structural and technical changes, they confronted (mostly) taken-for-granted conceptions of intelligence and ability, racial differences, merit, and deeply entrenched traditions of valued curriculum and appropriate practice at the schools.

Educators attempting to build commitment for detracking struggled with increasingly outmoded conceptions of intelligence, some of which reflect deep-seated racist and classist attitudes and prejudices. These conceptions played out in school as educators interpreted the skills and knowledge that educationally and economically privileged parents pass on to their children as innate intelligence—interpretations that guide decisions about track placements and the learning opportunities afforded to students in different tracks. Once these differences in "innate intelligence" were identified, bureaucratic efficiency dictated that the best way to accommodate these differences is to sort students into separate classes and provide them with differentiated curriculums. Detracking challenged all of these norms.

Laura Miller—a veteran teacher at Rollinghills Middle School—was the parent of children in Mansford City's Enriched Program and the teacher of Regular students. Miller was unhappy with the elite cliquishness and an uninspired academic curriculum that her own Enriched children experienced at school, and she was saddened by the disheartened and self-deprecating attitudes of her Regular students, whom she saw as far more capable than they saw themselves. In her search for better pedagogy, Miller regularly attended summer workshops on gifted education at the University of Connecticut. There, she learned through interaction with other gifted education specialists that Mansford's rigidly exclusionary grouping practices and stodgy Enriched curriculum didn't conform to the best thinking in gifted education. A gifted educator from another state first suggested to her that gifted youngsters might be better served in heterogeneous classrooms—a message she brought back to Rollinghills.

MULTIPLE WAYS TO BE SMART

As educators in each of the 10 schools worked to change structures and instructional techniques, they simultaneously challenged themselves and their colleagues to adopt the view that all students could achieve at very high levels, and communicated this expectation through the schools' structures and practices.

"Challenge" projects at Green Valley High School often provide students with several options to complete a requirement. During a *Romeo and Juliet* lesson, for example, a student may earn challenge credit by reciting part of the play, writing a contemporary script for the play, or researching the fashion of the time and submitting a portfolio of drawings and text. According to one teacher, these opportunities have enabled some of Green Valley's "nongifted" students and its lower achieving Latino students, who traditionally have not been exposed to Shakespeare, to prepare elaborate responses to their experiences with the play.

> Oftentimes they're really quite adept at drama. They like it a lot. So they enjoy going in front of their peers, performing. And that's generally the one they will choose—something that's a performance. They also like memorizing. The kids who can't do well on tests for example—I find it quite odd, and I'd like to do some research on this sometime—have wonderful memories. They will take a speech and do a dramatic interpretation of a speech.

Educators at a number of schools used new theories about the multidimensional nature of intelligence to explain and dignify racial differences in students' academic performance and school behavior. This new understanding led teachers to see diverse instructional strategies as legitimate ways to press all students to achieve. At some schools, educators gave greater emphasis to hard work and persistence, as opposed to conventional conceptions of ability.

One teacher at Plainview High School, for example, told us she doesn't believe in the traditional concept of intelligence. Rather, her view is that high achievement stems from "different motivational level. A student who has more faith in his or her ability, or more confidence, is going to be a higher achiever."

A team of Bearfield Middle School teachers decided that low ability shouldn't preclude students from an award for being outstanding. They agreed to nominate a student who "is not perfect, but works industriously." At the same time, this group bypassed a high-achieving student, "because he's not working hard for his ability."

Creating structures and school cultures that redefine who is smart and that make honors possible for every student challenges powerful school norms. Educators at the schools were far from unanimity on these matters. Despite some teachers' efforts to reconceptualize intelligence as multidimensional, developmental, and manifest equally across racial groups, traditional conceptions retained a firm hold.

Grant's experience was quite typical. Many teachers held fast to a traditional view of student abilities, and stubbornly resisted changes on that basis. But even Grant's reform-minded language arts teachers struggled with ways to judge the work of students who might be very intelligent, but had not learned how to "jump through the hoops" traditionally expected of top students. As one teacher told us,

> Some people give me real fine indications of their intelligence, but they're not getting the grade, because the grade is the reward for the hoops. As a teacher, it would be nice to just say, "God, you're a really smart person. I'd like to give you an '*A*.' " But that would then degenerate into "I like you, so I'm gonna give you an '*A*.' " . . . I'm not sure, when the grading comes out, I'm not sure how I'm gonna handle this, really.

Teachers at several of the schools reveal vestiges of a nativist view of intelligence. At King Middle School, one administrator commented that the school's open structure and climate works best for "those kids in the upper quartile who have the work ethic, and are not just *innately bright* and lazy." A Bearfield Middle School teacher shared this point of view in describing high-achieving students at the school, "Most honors kids are just academically talented. Few of them have a lot of *native intelligence*. Most of them are quote, unquote 'good kids'—ones who will study without you telling them to."[3]

Teachers entertaining newer developmental and multidimensional conceptions of intelligence must withstand the scrutiny of skeptical parents who fear they have much to lose if traditional conceptions are altered. For instance, a Plainview High School English teacher created a heterogeneous American studies class after reading research persuaded her that neither society nor schools really understand intelligence or know how to measure it. When she presented her research to parents—at the principal's request—her message was not well received, particularly by those parents whose children were in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. According to the teacher, " . . . if you were raised under the system that said you were very intelligent and high achieving, you don't want anyone questioning that system, OK? That's just the way it is." She said parents were most threatened by the way this research was going to be used by the school, and whether it would undermine advanced classes.

CONFRONTING RACIAL STEREOTYPES

Stereotypical views of minority students' ability and motivation for academic work also remained salient in schools and communities. In all schools, some educators drew connections quite openly between students' abilities and race and social class. For example, one educator lamented, "We're getting fewer honors kids, and that's just demographics." Another told us, "The percentage of academically capable . . . African American students versus the percentage of white students is very disproportionate." In a third school we heard, "They [Native American students] don't have the support at home, and they don't have the ability."

In many cases, these racial differences in ability are attributed to differences in background and culture. For example, Central High School's Latino population has traditionally been stereotyped as unmotivated. In the words of one social studies teacher:

> It's hard though! 'Cause there's only so much you can do with the kids. We don't get really well-motivated, well-educated kids. Most

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[3] For an elaborated discussion of how conceptions of intelligence were struggled over at the schools, see Oakes, Jones, and Lipton 1995.

> come from not ideal family situations. They're not very well motivated. . . . and it's really hard to do anything in that situation. No matter what you do as teachers, there's just some kids, nothing is going to help them, or nothing is going to solve your problems.

Similarly, Green Valley High School has what some teachers term a *pear-shaped* academic population—light on high and middle achievers and heavy on low achievers. This, according to one teacher, "is a function of where we live." This teacher believes that demographic shifts make the college-prep track inappropriate for everyone.

One Plainview AP teacher analyzed the gap between black and white student achievement with this statement:

> You know, every time we do something, I think, how will we deliver to Afro-American students. I don't think that a lot of teachers here really know where these kids come from, and I don't think they've seen the houses that they live in. I mean, maybe they have, but . . . I guess it's really hard to realize that somebody's mother might have been 15 when they were born, and they live with granny, and there's no books in the house. You can't give . . . that kid doesn't have an equal chance against the kid whose mother and father are both working and have a nice home with a stereo . . .

Another explained:

> You know, groups of African Americans go through the normal solid high school program, but it's rare to find one that . . . has an ambition to start off with the freshman biology, and wants to get that extra science in. Again, I'm not sure why. Part of it, I think, is skills. Part of it, I think . . . has to do with attitude toward excelling or ambitions for the future. I think most of the African Americans I talk to have much more limited ambitions.

At Explorer Middle School, many Native American students have been identified as "communication disordered," an official school classification referring to the students' verbal discomfort, and not a learning disability. This classification seems to ignore a number of cultural facts about these students, such as the different use of language, learned behavior that discourages speaking out, competing for attention, or upstaging peers. Some in the Union community maintained classist and racist stereotypes of the low-income white and African-American students at the school. Staff members regularly heard comments like, "Why'd they build such a nice school for those students?"

These culturally and racially specific views of intelligence were echoed in the voices of some educators, parents, and community members we interviewed at each of the 10 schools. In these cases, educator and community resistance to detracking reforms appear to reflect larger social conflicts over whether the culture and style of life of middle-class whites shape schools' definition of valued knowledge and, thus, lead educators and parents to equate middle-class thinking with "intelligence."

CONFRONTING POLITICAL PRESSURES AROUND RACE AND CLASS

Reformers also battled resistance and opposition from those in the communities and their own faculties who feared that detracking would jeopardize the benefits they received from the status quo. The pressure placed on most schools by savvy parents who want their children enrolled in the "best" classes may be the most salient of all of the responses to detracking. Parents of high-track students have been clearly advantaged both in educational opportunities and status. And because nearly all the schools previously operated competitive systems, permitting only a small percentage of student slots in "high" track classes, these parents have had few options but to push to have their children better educated than others. Because schools need political support—not only for funding and physical resources, but also for credibility—tracking policies that provide advantages to more privileged children have been exchanged for the political credit that more advantaged and involved parents bring to a school.[4] Schools and districts respond to parental resistance by reigning in the reform; and educators sometimes suspend efforts for change out of frustration.

PROTECTING PRIVILEGE AS DESERVING

Parental resistance is particularly contentious among parents who feel their school is neglecting "gifted" students, or using resources "meant" for one group of students on other, "less deserving" students. This belief is especially salient among a group of white parents at Liberty High School, nicknamed the "Mothers of Excellence." According to one:

> Liberty overlooks how very important it is to academically orient kids to get an academically stimulating education. Sometimes at

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[4] For a more complete discussion of this issue, see Wells and Serna 1995.

> Liberty it gets treated as a luxury. Oh, these kids are bright, they're going to do fine anyway. Well in reality, that's not true. A lot of these kids, if they're not stimulated, are going to fall back. . . . losing these kids, losing any kids is a tragedy. And it bothers me when, somehow, the district acts like losing a bright kid is not as tragic as losing the kids at the bottom.

Similarly, some white parents in the Bearfield Middle School community feel that their tax dollars are wrongly used to supplement the education of the African-American community's children:

> People from Allison Park, there's whites in there and there's blacks in there. It's mostly black. . . . First of all, they don't pay taxes like we pay taxes out in Dalton. And I don't think that's right that I have to pay those kinds of taxes when they don't but they still go to our school. . . . it has brought down our school system, and I don't feel that it should . . . I'm not a racist, but I am—I don't want my school being brought down because of a lower caliber.

Central High School's faculty proposed a new "custom calendar" so that students could earn course credit at a more individualized pace. The school year would be divided into nine-week quarters, followed by two-week intercessions. During the intercessions, students could make up lost credits or repeat classes. The custom calendar was touted as complementing detracking because it would allow lower achieving students to make up work or get ahead during the intercession. Central's principal reasoned,

> The paradigm here is that it takes every student . . . 180 days to learn Algebra I, and my question is, how valid could that be? Aren't there some students who might need a couple more days to do that? Now is it better to tell those students that they're a failure and can't learn because they can't learn it in 180 days, or is it better to give them a few extra days to do it?

The custom calendar had features created with the special needs of migrant students and other at-risk students in mind. Migrant students often are away from the school for long periods of time; with the custom calendar, migrants would be able to complete classes within a nine-week quarter. The parents who spearheaded the move to defeat the custom calendar initiative did so on the grounds that the majority of students were well served by the existing calendar and the custom calendar was designed to benefit only a few. While most Central faculty favored the custom calendar, the proposal was denounced by powerful parents in the community and more conventional teachers. An assistant principal realized only later that, although the calendar was not framed as a redistributive policy, it was seen as a symbol of policymaking aimed at helping students traditionally disadvantaged by the system (at this school low-income, limited-English-speaking Latino students) and taking from those who benefit from the status quo. He felt the custom calendar was used as a symbol of a liberal ideological effort "to take away from the haves and give to the have-nots."

Even in Green Valley, where parent opposition to detracking is mild, one district administrator claims that the high school actually loses a fair amount of disillusioned white, middle-class students to private schools:

> If they [white parents] don't feel that there's a program here that is giving their child every opportunity, they pull their kids out and put them in private school. . . . I keep saying, "The educational opportunities are there if your child chooses to take advantage of them." I think parents . . . are saying, "All of the emphasis is on giving kids a second chance, a third chance, a fourth chance." . . . The teachers are draining themselves trying to nurture kids who come to school with nothing. The other [parents] are saying, "What's in it for my child?"

One important lesson we learned from the schools in our detracking study is that many parents of students in high track classes exude a strong sense of entitlement. According to these parents, their children are entitled to "more"—resources, teacher time, challenging curriculums, and better instructional strategies—because they are more intelligent and talented than other students. Strongly related to this sense of entitlement is the social construction of intelligence and the white, middle- and upper-middle-class cultural capital inherent in such a construction (see Oakes, Wells, Datnow, and Jones 1995).

A counselor at one high school in our study noted that parents of honors students will not take time to listen to teachers or administrators about pedagogical reasons for doing away with the honors track. She said they are simply "not as concerned with the whole [school] as much as they should be" (Datnow 1995, p. 63). Another school's coordinator of gifted programs lamented that parents were not interested in the substance of what she offered students in heterogeneous settings, only in maintaining the status that a separate and different program brought their children. An assistant principal in one of the high schools noted that "many upper class, professional parents hold occupational positions in which they work toward equity and democracy, but expect their children to be given special treatment . . ." (Ray 1995, p. 2).

In part, these fears are reasonable, given the higher education system in the U.S. and the way it forces high schools to differentiate between various courses and, ultimately, the students in those courses. We have seen that the demands of competitive, high-status universities and politically powerful parents who want their children to attend these institutions drives K-12 educators to use differentiated credentials as exchange value for students in separate and distinct tracks. Given that the parents most likely to influence curriculum policy at the school level are generally those who are college educated themselves, the symbiotic relationship between tracking and stratification at the secondary level and the college admissions process perpetuates the intergeneration transmission of advantage. Parents who have attended universities, particularly high-status ones, have a clear understanding of what their childrens' high school transcripts should look like to assure them a seat in the college of their choice.

In several of the senior high schools we studied, parents considered the College Board's Advanced Placement courses, with strict entrance requirements and an academically rigorous test-driven curriculum, critical to make their children competitive for slots in the best colleges. This parent pressure can override the concerns of educators at these schools who point out that the Advanced Placement curriculum neither provides students with access to engaging subject matter nor involves them in inquiry-based learning experiences that teachers often see as consistent with high standards.

FEAR OF BRIGHT, WHITE FLIGHT

Parental opposition understandably leads to a fear that white and wealthy parents will abandon the schools, taking the school's political credibility with them. This fear compels even reform-minded individuals to proceed with caution, and sometimes retain programs they find problematic.

Rollinghills Middle School's current tracking practices grew out of its countywide, court-ordered school desegregation plan. Many educators and parents told us that the district created its four-track structure expressly to appease fearful white parents, who, according to one Rollinghills teacher, "wield a big stick." Consequently, Rollinghills proceeded slowly and strategically with detracking, knowing, as Assistant

Principal Jane Griffen put it, that for white parents only "part of their agenda is 'I want a challenging academic program for my child,' and part of their agenda is that it can't be that way if there are 12 black children in the classroom with them."

At Plainview, Principal Arthur St. John is convinced that the AP course offerings are essential to maintaining the white student population in Plainview. His allegiance to the AP program is grounded in his prior experiences as an administrator at Hamilton, a nearby suburban high school. The student population at Hamilton shifted from all white and upper-middle-class to all black and lower middle to poor in a matter of 10 years. Mere mention of Hamilton and "what happened there" serves as a not-so-subtle reminder of the need to appease white parents. Consequently, Plainview's principal and many faculty feel they must encourage minority achievement within the present tracked system, rather than attempt to disassemble tracking. Bearfield Middle School's superintendent is also deeply concerned about the potential "white flight" that might ensue if the white community perceives that schools are catering to the African-American community. As he put it:

> If we're going to start talking about all kinds of other things like equity in schools, how are we going to [help] the parents to understand what we're even talking about? Because what's going to be perceived is, "You're just trying to give me a bunch of mumbo-jumbo so you can take care of those black kids. . . . We're going to upset people and spend a lot of money . . . and what'll happen is the white people will leave the system.

SILENCE OF THE LESS POWERFUL

The political influence of uncomfortable high-track parents was balanced only rarely by other voices. At most schools, parents of lower achieving and minority students have relatively little political clout, and have, for the most part, been silent.

For example, Native American parents were mostly uninvolved at Explorer Middle School. Some felt that the school has not approached the community in an appropriate manner. Others blamed an ugly racial history in the community. Adults in the community remember Native Americans being beaten in school for speaking their language, and many were sent away to boarding schools. Native American parents and community members told us that, when they were young, stores and businesses in the town posted signs that read, "No Natives or Dogs." Only two Native Americans work at Explorer, and many community members cite racist hiring practices. The last superintendent discontinued a process begun by his predecessor of working with the Native American community to address student problems, angering and further alienating the community.

At Rollinghills, African-American parent voices were also much quieter than those of whites, and Rollinghills Vice Principal Jane Griffen told us, "They do not have the same powerful network as the white parents do." Only one African American sat on the school board, largely because of the gerrymandered downtown subdistrict, and one Rollinghills teacher told us, "The African Americans who are principals and superintendents . . . are afraid to speak out because their jobs may be in jeopardy."

We heard various reasons from educators for this silence. Some Grant teachers said that they have trouble contacting parents of failing students. Teachers at Grant and Bearfield Middle School told us that they don't have time for all their students, so they concentrate on those students who seem to have concerned parents. One Bearfield teacher stated that he focuses on students who have two parents, because he fears his efforts might be wasted on single-parent children.

Many minority parents told us that the school makes little effort to reach out to them, and that they feel uncomfortable at the school. This problem may be exacerbated at schools that draw their minority populations from outlying areas. For example, a major problem at Rollinghills Middle School is the school's uneven dissemination of information about the heterogeneous program. Although the teachers meet yearly with parents of prospective 6th graders at all *neighboring* feeder schools, many parents from the city are uninformed about the programs available at Rollinghills, especially the heterogeneous program. Efforts to reach out to city parents have enjoyed minimal success. Central and Green Valley, which both have large numbers of Spanish-speaking parents among their student populations, find that this language barrier also inhibits efforts to generate support for their reform efforts (Yonezawa and Williams 1995).

GOING IT ALONE

At many schools, parental dissatisfaction causes nervous district office personnel to "pull in the reigns" on school reform efforts. Reformers at Liberty, Union, Explorer, and Central all confront strong skepticism or opposition from their district offices. And although the

Bearfield district has a written policy denouncing tracking, district officials make no attempt to enforce it. Some are clearly uncomfortable with Bearfield's detracking efforts. In the spring of 1993, Bearfield personnel found that their Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) scores had dropped slightly in some areas, although they remained steady or even improved in others. This slight decline was used by district-level officials as "proof" that heterogeneity was negatively affecting achievement. Due to pressure from the district office, Bearfield focused during the 1993-94 school year on raising test scores—a focus that most of the faculty felt was misguided:

> Our CTBS did not [go up]. . . . And so [district officials] were riding Ben [the principal] last year. We could feel it when we came back to school this year. That the stress was there, we need to get these scores up. And it was not like Ben. And we spent so much of this year worrying about tests, standardized tests. And . . . uh, it's unfortunate. It's unfortunate because that's not what we're about, and that's not what we should be about.

Union also is hampered by equivocation from its district administration. According to the vice principal:

> What little support that we have for the program is being eroded. Then our program will be gutted, and they'll come in here and build walls in those centers upstairs, and the chairs in their rows, and it will be business as usual. . . . It will be some external force that causes us . . . not to be able to do what it is we're trying to do here. . . . We've seen some of that already. Chinking away at the armor here and there.

As a consequence of such reform ambivalence at the district office, few change agents believe they have support or buffering, and most feel they face enormous community pressures alone.

WHAT HAVE THESE CHANGE AGENTS ACHIEVED?

Surprisingly enough, at a structural level, these 10 efforts must be judged to have been successful. All of the schools reduced some, and many eliminated all, of their basic or remedial courses. Most provided all students with access to the schools' most challenging or honors curriculum, and several developed a common curriculum in key academic subjects at some grade levels. All became far more attentive to providing greater curricular access and richer learning opportunities to low-income students and students of color.

In fact, in several instances we found detracking actually convinced educators that low-track students are far more capable of engaging with higher level curriculum and instruction in heterogeneous groups than they had previously thought. As one middle school counselor put it, "Heterogeneous grouping has made teachers think differently about all kids. They see more potential in kids; they will work harder with them and their needs." Other educators' comments affirm that this has indeed been the case. For example, one told us, "The program has done amazing things for standard track kids . . ."

Moreover, a number of teachers in the 10 schools suggested the mechanisms through which detracking enabled them to improve the quality of student work in their classrooms. One attributed the change to an atmosphere of higher expectations in heterogeneous classes, "All of a sudden somebody says, 'You can do this!' " Another credited the greater access to knowledge in saying, "Heterogeneous grouping helps to stimulate, motivate students because of just the exposure that the students have." Others suggested that heterogeneous grouping makes the need to employ a broader array of teaching strategies more salient to teachers, and the greater opportunities that result allow former low-track students to achieve. A senior high school English teacher suggested how this greater exposure might take place when she told us:

> [The student] who normally wouldn't succeed does succeed because the teacher is using strategies that appeal to various learning modes. Roles change, reverse. More time is spent on concepts, themes, thinking about things, projecting, making predictions, connections among the works read.

At Plainview Senior High School, several states away, another teacher echoed this view as she told us that she set up her heterogeneous class to permit a lot of independent student learning, as well as dynamic class discussions that engage students of different backgrounds and academic strengths. This teacher believes she has created a learning environment where she sees more students looking for what she calls "the genius within them." Her multidimensional classroom, she explains, allows students to develop insight into their own ways of knowing and learning, and when they do that, they become highly motivated students in the broader sense of the word, thirsty for a greater understanding of the world around them. Several teachers told us that a more individualized, yet interdependent approach to teaching and learning may be particularly helpful in racially and socioeconomically mixed schools, in which students bring different ways of knowing to school.

Some of the schools also have made headway in ameliorating racial tensions in their schools. For example, by emphasizing themes such as "Building a Community of Friends" and "Different Is Not Deficient," Bearfield Middle School has defused the racial disharmony rampant in its surrounding community and has brought the African-American and white communities harmoniously together under their school's roof.

However, none of the educators introducing change achieved the extent of detracking originally sought, and several worry that old patterns of inequality are appearing within their schools' new, detracked structure. Most feel battered and bruised by their efforts to reform, and some have not survived as school leaders. They know now that they missed important lessons not taught by the change literature—a literature that generally neglects the unique problems encountered by schools implementing reforms designed to give more to our least powerful citizens—low-income and nonwhite students—in a societal culture that usually demands that they receive less. Most of the change agents that we observed were caught unprepared when the process and the shape of their equity-minded reforms were profoundly affected by norms and politics concerning race, gender, sexual orientation, language, and socioeconomic status.

In response to normative and political pressures, all the schools have—intentionally or unintentionally—left some classes out of the reform, ensuring that the highest achieving students can still get some sort of "special" treatment: separate honors, advanced, AP, or Regents classes exist at all 10 schools. These elite classes aid several of the schools in maintaining the delicate balance between satisfying the demands of an important parental power base and providing equitable opportunities for all students. Most of the students and families who benefit from these compromises are white.

For instance, the relatively small number of gifted parents in the Green Valley community are dissatisfied with the 9th and 10th grade heterogeneous English curriculum, but they tolerate the classes because honors classes are available in 11th and 12th grade. And, despite the fact that parents of gifted students are generally satisfied with the "standard" rich curriculum offered at King, they may be reassured that their children will be well served by the existence of the Regents classes in the 8th grade. Grant High School's effort to eliminate separate language arts honors classes has been particularly difficult because of the districtwide tradition of offering self-contained gifted classes at the elementary and middle school level. Some parents who are accustomed to this special treatment argue that their children cannot be well-served in an integrated system. Thus, while Grant's principal initially condoned the changes being made by the language arts department, he has been influenced recently by a small but vocal group of parents of gifted children. On the basis of their complaints, the principal refused the department's request to eliminate separate honors classes for 9th graders in the 1994-1995 school year. Consequently, the department once again will offer both honors classes with open enrollment, and regular classes with honors option at the 9th grade level. At Green Valley, parents of gifted students also are accustomed to special programs in the elementary and middle schools. They, too, express considerable discomfort about the absence of special treatment at the high school. Many Explorer Middle School parents are pushing for the resumption of pull-out programs; some even advocate separate all-day classes for gifted and talented and special education students.

Plainview also has an active parent group that works to preserve and expand the school's AP offerings: the PTO Executive Board, a fairly tight-knit group of almost all white parents, meets monthly with the principal to serve as his sounding board. One teacher noted that there is

> such great community support for tracking. . . . there's absolutely no way, and the administration would never want to do this anyway, that they would ever get rid of AP.

Because of these pressures, educators who are committed to change often try "to straddle the fence" between pleasing powerful parents and giving low-achieving students more access by reducing the number of tracks, rather than dismantling the track structure. For example, Rollinghills Middle School offers parents a choice between tracked and detracked classes for their children. However, the shortage of African-American families choosing Rollinghill's detracked teams has been striking. Most teachers are not clear if African-American parents have good information about the combined teams, or if they actively choose not to participate. Some—particularly the small number of African-American teachers—believe that the bused-in African-American children have been deliberately excluded to keep the detracked teams whiter than the rest of the school. Most years, the principal has assigned a handful of African-American students to the detracked teams to balance the large number of white choosers.

The problem with such strategies is that they reproduce a hierarchical structure supported by a culture that values the knowledge and life experiences of some students more than others. This allows white and wealthy parents to maintain very separate classrooms for their children and any lower income or non-white students who "act white and wealthy," buying into the dominant culture view of the educational system as fair and meritocratic. This persistent tracking structure, albeit with fewer and ostensibly "higher" tracks, drives ongoing curriculum differentiation, which leads to unequal expectations and inevitably unequal standards for students of different racial, social class, and cultural backgrounds. As Bearfield's principal put it bluntly,

> . . . as our business manager superintendent once told me, the power is neither black nor white; it's green—as in money. And that's where the power is. Rich people have clout. Poor people don't have clout.

LESSONS FROM THE SCHOOLS—THEORIES OF SCHOOL CHANGE

Recent scholarship in educational change makes clear that the job of leading school reform goes far beyond bringing a generic set of technical and managerial skills to bear on a fairly predictable change process (Fullan 1991, Hargreaves 1994). The task of marshaling commitment and capacity for any particular school reform is complicated by the fact that those who are expected to change (teachers and students) and those who are expected to accept the changes (parents and other community members) assign their own meanings to changes and respond to them in ways that are consistent with their existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Consequently, even when change agents are "successful," reforms are transformed as they make their way into the cultures and political milieu of particular schools.

Many of the reform leaders at these schools were reasonably well versed in the change literature and, understandably, fairly optimistic about their reforms' prospects for success. Depending on their fluency with the literature, these educators knew that change would likely not go forward precisely as planned (Elmore and McLaughlin 1988, Sarason 1990); that school reform is a process, not an event (Fullan 1991); that change involves mutual adaptation (McLaughlin 1976, Tyack and Cuban 1995); that reforms will differ depending on the unique culture of each school (Sarason 1982); that the change process is nonrational and nonlinear (Louis and Miles 1990, Wise 1977); that successful policymakers set the conditions for effective administration but charge local practitioners with the development of solutions (Elmore and McLaughlin 1988, Firestone and Corbett 1989); that schools are "bottom heavy" and "loosely coupled" (Elmore 1983, Weick 1976); and, of course, that we cannot mandate what matters (Elmore and McLaughlin 1988, McLaughlin 1976).

These school leaders saw themselves as change agents spearheading an ongoing process of improvement. Moreover, in accordance with the change literature, the detracking reforms had a healthy "bottom-up" beginning in all 10 schools. Initially, at least, this "bottom" comprised only a fraction of each school's faculty and community. However, all of the schools' reform leaders understood the importance of establishing a culture of change (Sarason 1990). Thus, they did not plan to tinker merely with the technical but, rather, to create enabling structures that would help them to eliminate tracking and support their schools' continuing quest for inquiry and improvement.

However, the difficulties these change agents faced connected in quite profound ways with racial and cultural politics in local communities and the larger society. By tackling detracking reform, each of the schools became entangled in the larger cultural struggle (and ambivalence) over the meaning of equality and opportunity in racially mixed settings. As such, detracking, like other equity-minded reforms, differs from other school change efforts because it creates a struggle between individuals over scarce resources and entails an ideological struggle over the meaning of culture in schools. These struggles created enormous tensions between schools and resistant community members, and fostered considerable friction within the schools.[3]

The reformers we studied found little in the change literature to help them with these contentious aspects of their reform. Most of this literature, useful as it is to schools generally, is silent on matters of race and social class, and the politics of altering the distribution of access and achievement. Perhaps this is because nearly all of this work assumes a relatively neutral change process and, largely by omission, fails to consider how the race and social class make up of faculty and students and/or the extent to which particular reforms attend to race and/or social class equity may affect the course of change.

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[3] We argue elsewhere that if we conceive of schools as mediating institutions, themselves situated within locally constructed zones of normative and political mediation that embody larger cultural patterns, we can better understand the profound differences between equity-minded reforms and other change efforts. See Oakes et al. 1996.

Our findings suggest that our search for *basic* principles of change agentry and strategies for dealing with *typical* change barriers may blind us to the way reform leadership must be contextualized in light of powerful and particular race- and class-linked meanings that particular reforms and their implementation engender in schools and communities (Oakes et al. 1996). In both the process and outcomes of their work, educators tackling reforms that expand access to status and opportunity also struggled to construct new meanings of equal educational opportunity in their schools while they struck new political arrangements necessary to democratize the school experience.

LESSONS FROM THE SCHOOLS—
THE PRACTICE OF SCHOOL CHANGE

This chapter has focused on change agents in racially mixed schools whose detracking efforts were driven by their concern for equity. There is much to be learned about reform from these schools in which social justice and diversity were central to the impetus, plans, and processes of change. Their experiences suggest a cornerstone principle of school change: race and social class systematically affect the course of reform. The stories of these schools reveal that the major issue around tracking and detracking reforms is not which grouping strategy "works" best in the conventional sense. Educators grapple far more with normative and political issues around race, ethnicity, and poverty than with developing the more technical features of a reformed, diversity-oriented school. Their experiences raise fundamental questions about whether or not society wants schools to push beyond the conventional meaning of equal educational opportunity, and if and how policymakers and other decision makers can help educators make the necessary structural and cultural changes.

The struggles of these 10 schools deserve policymakers' and educators' attention because they offer practical and political lessons. Their stories provide insight into the depth and complexity of detracking's connections with larger normative and political struggles. Through their experiences, we can broaden our understanding of the uniquely political nature of educational reform with social justice as its goal.

Effective and obvious strategies for dealing with these normative and political challenges do not emerge from these stories. However, these schools' experiences do offer considerable insight into the way educators might proceed. Clearly, the profound dilemmas that detracking schools encounter reflect deep cultural conflicts that are unlikely to be settled in the course of school reform. In that spirit, we offer the following suggestions to equity-minded school reformers.

Aim for the "ideal" of completely detracked schools, and eschew labeling and ranking of students on global categories. While you'll probably need to proceed incrementally and slowly, keep clear on these ideals. Promise worried parents that, as you change the grouping structure, you will accommodate any child whose intellectual gifts are so extreme or whose disabilities are so severe that they require different schooling arrangements on a case-by-case basis. Do not offer new ways of differentiated grouping for particular classifications of students.

Affirm the democratic values that detracking efforts embody and openly acknowledge that this is a reform with a moral, as well as an empirical, grounding. At the same time, however, share the empirical evidence about the problems of tracking and the promise of detracking in order to reassure anxious parents and skeptical colleagues that your principled actions also have firm grounding in educational research. Bearfield's principal, Ben McCall, is only one of many who found the research compelling in the struggle with decisions about what's both right and effective for schools.

Emphasize the educational high ground on which detracking rests, at the same time that you are vocal about the social justice basis for reform. You can argue with legitimacy and conviction that detracking can leverage higher quality teaching and learning for all students. This argument has considerable validity, because those teaching strategies and learning experiences that seem to work best for heterogeneous groups—those that actively engage students in rich and complex concepts and problems—are also those recommended for meeting the needs of gifted and talented students, as well as generally raised academic standards. Consequently, detracking can be positioned as reform to benefit all students.

This argument may not allay white, middle-class parents' anxieties about increased racial and social class mixing at school, but it rightfully moves the argument away from the contention that detracking reforms sacrifice the needs and interests of high-achieving children in the interest of equity. Of course, this argument will only have political meaning if it is backed by real changes in teaching practices in detracked classrooms.

Cultivate a climate of continuous learning and inquiry among faculty and parents, acknowledging that it takes serious investigation about all of these issues for educators and parents to take risks with practices that society has taught us work to our children's advantage. Challenge explicitly the existing norms of intelligence, student ability, and what is valued knowledge. Promise to treat the reform itself as part of the inquiry process, and investigate the results of any changes. Have faculty use at least some of their professional development time around detracking to examine the relationship between common-sense conceptions of intelligence, student ability, and valued knowledge, and social factors—including race, class, and gender. The growing bodies of literature on the developmental and multidimensional nature of intelligence and learning and the relationship among culture, social context, and cognition can help ground these discussions on values, beliefs, and common sense.

Finally, *make certain* that all voices are represented and heard as you deliberate about detracking. Bringing parents and community members from different racial groups and socioeconomic positions to the same table to talk will probably require a deliberate and tenacious effort. Grant High School's language arts department, for example, created and met with a detracking advisory group composed of a highly heterogeneous number of parents who visited classrooms and helped shepherd reform.

However, simply bringing diverse groups together isn't enough. Genuine democratic deliberation among these groups may require the development of strategies to help parents of lower track students speak with as much confidence and sense of entitlement about what they want for their children as the parents of high-achieving children usually do. White middle-class parents must be allowed to struggle openly with the contradictions between their very understandable hopes for their children and an educational system that is manifestly politically and academically skewed in their favor in the presence of those who are not white or middle class.

While this is extremely difficult, it is ultimately neither respectful nor effective for educators to pit themselves as advocates for children who are disadvantaged by the status quo against the parents of the children who benefit from the current system. The full participation of all segments of the community is required to eliminate the gap between the educational opportunity expressed in the American Creed and the reality of educational failure for so many students.

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4

Students' Perspectives on School Improvement

Jean Rudduck, Julia Day, and Gwen Wallace

In this chapter, we explore what an agenda for school improvement looks like when constructed from the student perspective. Our argument is straightforward: If educators are ultimately concerned about our students' achievements and opportunities, we must take at least part of our agenda for school improvement from their accounts of their school experience.

Educational researchers increasingly support this position. Erickson and Schultz (1992) conclude that "virtually no research has been done that places student experience at the centre of attention" (p. 476). In his authoritative review of how school reform gets implemented, Michael Fullan (1991) asks: "What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered . . . ?" (p. 70). Levin (1995) notes that while the literature on school-based management "advocates more important roles for teachers and parents, . . . students are usually omitted from the discussion" (p. 17). Andersson (1995) argues that "politicians who decide about school reforms and the teachers who run the

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Authors' note: Making Your Way Through Secondary School, a list of the papers documenting the project discussed here, is available from Professor Jean Rudduck, Director of Research, Homerton College, Cambridge, England, CB2 2PH.

classrooms seldom ask how the students themselves perceive their school" (p. 5). And Nieto (1994) brings the issue of student perspective into the foreground of the school improvement discussion when she argues that

> . . . reforming school structures alone will not lead to differences in student achievement . . . if such changes are not accompanied by profound changes in how we as educators think about our students. One way to begin the process of changing school policies is to listen to students' views about them (pp. 395–396).

"The school's ultimate aim"—and the proper focus, therefore, for school improvement efforts—"is to enhance student progress, achievement, and development" (Stoll and Fink 1996, p. 43). Many U.S. improvement and development programs are fueled by concern for students and their attainments. And a summary of 60 school improvement projects in the United Kingdom shows that the most frequently cited goals for school improvement efforts are raising student attainment, raising expectations, and enhancing students' self-esteem and morale (Gray and Reynolds 1996). But the success of such projects is often checkered. According to Fullan (1993), the shortfall in success occurs because the problems are "complex and untractable" and "the strategies that are used do not focus on things that will really make a difference" (p. 46). We agree. But where solutions emphasize the importance of whole school planning, teacher collegiality, and working partnerships with other agencies, we would add another dimension. Rarely is there a suggestion that schools might usefully start the process of improvement by inviting their students to talk about what makes learning a positive or disappointing experience for them; what enhances or diminishes their motivation and engagement; and what makes some of them give up and others settle for a minimum-risk, minimum-effort position—even when they know that doing well matters. Taking account of the student perspective in planning for change could really make a difference.

The neglect of student voice is not new. When researchers reflected on why the educational reforms of the '70s seemed to be having so little impact on the fundamental structures and processes of schooling, Jean Rudduck (1980) argued that student reaction might be one missing piece of the puzzle:

> . . . Where innovations fail to take root in schools and classrooms, it may be because students are guardians of the existing culture, and as such represent a powerful conservative force. . . . Unless we give

> attention to the problems that students face we may be overlooking a significant feature of the innovation process.

"New behaviors must be learned," says Fullan (1993, p. 62). Again, we agree. But while schools regularly give priority to organizing induction courses to help teachers understand and manage significant changes to the way they teach, they do not do the same for the students whose ways of learning are also affected by planned change. Quite often schools neglect to explain the purposes and characteristics of the new teaching and learning approaches to students. And if students do not have the curiosity to ask, or the patience to puzzle things out, they escape from the ambiguity of the situation by moving back to the familiar ground of their regular classroom regimes. Moreover, they have the power to make the teacher step back from the innovation in order to resist the discomfort of change. Aoki (1984) argues that a precondition of developing new and effective ways of working in the classroom is for students and teachers to discuss the implications of any innovative approach to the way they work together. There must, he said, be "a communal venturing forth."

In the '70s the vehicle for school improvement was the high-profile, high-investment curriculum reform project, which carried new contents and new pedagogy into the classroom. Twenty years later we have a new armory. The newest instruments of reform are performance indicators, development plans, and target setting. The strategy has changed, but the neglect of the student perspective continues. We are still not consulting students to find out what aspects of schooling *they* think might make learning more effective for them.

Why do we not regularly and automatically discuss these things with our students and allow their reflections to help shape our policy for change? An obvious answer is *tradition*—that's just not the way we do things. And, as Maxine Greene has said, "What happens in [schools] appears to have the sanction of natural law and can no more be questioned . . . than the laws of gravity." In this situation, power relations can make teachers reluctant to concede that young people might have something important to say about the management of learning. The defensive position—and here we are quoting a school principal—is to maintain that students "are not competent to judge matters of teaching and learning." This is what Gerald Grace (1995) refers to as a convenient "ideology of immaturity." But what researchers and teachers who have ventured down the route of consulting students have found is that young people *are* observant, *are* often capable of analytic and constructive comment, and usually respond *well* to the serious responsibility of helping identify aspects of schooling that strengthen or get in the way of their learning (see Cullingford 1991).

Educators must accept some of the responsibility if some students are reticent and reluctant to offer their views, for we have conspired in constructing that unreadiness. But, as Soo Hoo (1993, p. 386) has said, students' voices are likely to evolve as they find "their experiences respected and reaffirmed by others." It may also be that we needed a context in which it seemed legitimate to take student opinion into account. The "school improvement" movement provides such a context.

RESEARCHING STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOLING

What evidence do we have that students' agenda for school improvement might differ from other agendas? Recent research in Australia looks at differences in the way school principals, teachers, parents, and students see the goals of effective schools. Townsend (1994, p. 146) notes "the comparatively low correlation between students' responses and everyone else's." This observation, he argues, "provides some indication that schools . . . may not be responding to the perceived desires of students but are perhaps being influenced by outside pressures of the economy or government policy" . . . and that this . . . "may indicate the need for the strengthening of the role students play in decision-making forums." He recommends that schools build better opportunities "for students to voice their concerns."

Our own research offers a detailed picture of students' concerns. It is based on more than 800 interviews with students between 12 and 16 years old. The data show that students' agenda for school improvement complements but differs from those constructed by policymakers. These data do not displace the more teacher- and management-oriented guidance offered in the key texts of school improvement. They merely offer some alternative starting points.

Our study was designed to provide insight into the experience of being a secondary school student in the 1990s. The key concept of our study was "school career." Its value, as Goffman (1961, p.119) explains, is its "two-sidedness." One side is linked to such things as "image of self and self-identity," while the other concerns the relationship of the individual to the "institutional complex." Hence, students' school careers can be looked at in two ways. First, in terms of movement through the school years or grades, each with its new demands and turning points. Second, in terms of students' changing school experiences and the messages about themselves that they receive through formal and informal channels.

We conducted our study in three comprehensive secondary schools—one in each of three school districts in the midlands and north of England. In England, students normally attend primary (or elementary) school from age 5 to 11. (These are years 1 to 6 of formal education.) At age 11 or 12, the majority move on to secondary school and move through the last five years (years 7 to 11) of compulsory schooling. The leaving age is 16. The work for the public examinations spans two years and starts in year 10 of formal schooling, when students are 14 years old.

Our study concentrated on one group of students in each school who were 12 years old at the start of the research and 16 years old when it ended in the summer of 1995. The interview data were supplemented by information gathered from teachers as well as through analysis of school records and documents. In addition, the researchers attended some key events (such as parents' evenings) involving their target group.

The three schools were interestingly different. Each faced the challenge of change in ways that reflected its particular context and history. One school, with a strong academic tradition, was trying to broaden its population and take students from more diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Another school served a predominantly disadvantaged, working-class, ethnically mixed community with a small new influx of white, middle-class families. Unemployment in the area was high. The third school's population was predominantly white and working class. It served a former coal mining community where unemployment was also high.

Students were interviewed once a term for about 20 minutes, at first in friendship pairs and later individually. They were asked how they saw the demands and opportunities of the particular year they were in, how they saw their own progress, what they liked about learning at this stage, and what they found difficult. They were also asked about their friendships and leisure activities and about their views of the future.

The students' teachers were asked about their experience teaching members of the target class, about approaches that seemed to work well, and about any concerns they had about individuals or groups. The teachers were invited to talk about the progress of individual members of the class. Members of the senior management teams were asked to talk about major policy developments in the school and about current concerns and recent achievements (see also Harris and Rudduck 1993; Rudduck, Chaplain, and Wallace 1996).

Sometimes students talked directly about things that supported or blocked their learning, so in this chapter we can represent the widely shared views in a straightforward way. But sometimes we have gone beyond the students' words to suggest things that seemed to us to be the logical meaning behind what they said. We have identified, from students' accounts of their schooling experiences, a number of things teachers might think about and do to help students make the most of their schooling. We developed some general perspectives on schooling and learning, which emerged from our year-by-year data analysis, and a set of practical recommendations. The general perspectives and practical recommendations together constitute a student agenda for school improvement.

MAKING YOUR WAY THROUGH SECONDARY SCHOOL

The concept of "school career," which provided a focus for our field work and data analysis, led us to look closely at the transitions that are a significant feature of students' school experience. Numerous studies of transition have focused on the move from primary to secondary school and the move beyond compulsory schooling (for a summary see Harris et al. 1994). What interested us was not so much these traditional exit and entry points, but rather the internal transitions and their implications for learning as students moved through the five years of secondary schooling.

In the United Kingdom, the structure of secondary schooling is highly segmented and fragmented. It is segmented vertically through time, with each year having clear boundaries. It is also segmented horizontally through classes and subjects, with each day broken up into a series of slots—a pattern that bears no functional relationship to any other feature of real life. Educators pay relatively little attention to the influence of the year boundaries on students' school careers and their commitment to learning. In our study, we looked at the way that the regimented movement of students through the different grades, or years, affects their perception of learning and of themselves as learners. We also wanted to find out when, during the five years of secondary schooling, the students experienced opportunities for drift. We believed that such an analysis would allow us to identify targets for our school improvement efforts.

First, we took a broad view. Our data suggest that there are two "peaks" in secondary school students' engagement—in the first year and again in the fourth and fifth years—but that the two are different. What is missing between the two high points of engagement is an awareness among students of the continuities of learning, not only in terms of content but also in terms of ways of working. Data at each year of compulsory schooling show considerable tension between the academic and social aspects of students' lives, but at year 7 this tension is fanned by the largely social novelties of the new school. Learning (other than social learning) is somewhat overshadowed by the excitement, social risks, and allure of the move to "the big school." Engagement peaks again in years 10 and 11, when it is driven by the imperative of getting good grades. While many students are achievement-oriented at this stage, learning is characterized by the paraphernalia of revision, the prioritization of short-term memorization, and, for many, acute pressure.

The task for the school is different at each stage. At year 7 it is to anchor and sustain a commitment to learning in the turbulence and excitement of transition. At year 11 it is to support 15- to 16-year-old students in coping with the pressures of school when the demands of their social lives are urgent. Let us look briefly at students' perceptions of each year in turn as they make their way through secondary school. What is it like to join "the big school"?

YEAR 7

Fifteen years ago research characterized the transition from primary to secondary school as being like the experience of confronting Dante's gates of hell: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here" was the message. But year 7 is now the ultimate user-friendly experience. There are welcoming information booklets (often written by the students themselves), class teachers who have learned students' names before the start of term, and social bonding sessions for the form and the year group. Ironically, teachers' attempts to minimize anxiety and to make the newcomers feel "at home" are countered by the older students' concerns to enhance new students' anxiety. Their "welcoming" rituals are designed to make the newcomers "know their place" within a hierarchy of seniority with sharp divisions between the different years, which the older students construct. Particular incidents were still sharply etched on students' minds a year or more later. Newcomers are thrown over walls; they are rolled down hills; they don't arrive at the right place at the right time; and they wear the wrong clothes to the first social events. Some rules are bewildering, and there's a different order of risk in the big school.

> In our old school there were no troubles, with people not really stealing anything. Just like some people took, like chocolate biscuits out of lunch boxes, [but in the new school] people nick everything. (Female, 12 years)

The novelty is compelling. After the relatively restricted environment of primary schooling students are excited by the variety of spaces and resources. And after working for long periods in their primary schools with only one or a small number of teachers, there is now a great variety of different teachers:

> There's one who prods you, one who swears a bit, one who goes red in the face. It's more interesting, isn't it? Used to be we just sat in one classroom listening to one teacher blabbing on all day. (Male, 12 years)

We asked students about what advantages there were to being in the secondary school. Most of the replies related to things other than learning:

> At primary school we started at a quarter to nine and finished at half past three, and now we start at nine and end at quarter to four. So we can stay in bed a bit longer. (Female, 12 years)

> After school there's trampolining, badminton, football, and things like that. (Male, 12 years)

> We're using nets [for basketball] now instead of just standing on chairs with our hands over our heads pretending to be baskets. (Male, 12 years)

One comment summed it all up:

> School's great—apart from the lessons. (Female, 12 years)

YEAR 8

Teachers tend to view year 8 as a year of stability, but students want something to excite and challenge their minds now that they are less preoccupied with learning the ways of a new school. It is a strange, featureless year when routine sets in and engagement can falter. It's a year when students can become preoccupied with their social selves, changing friends and trying out new social groupings. Andy Hargreaves (1996, p. 14) suggests that this is the year when students want to broaden their horizons by moving outside the tight boundary of the year cohort to meet other students in the school. It's the year when, no longer the youngest in the school, they become aware of their own maturity and want more autonomy. They resent rules that apply to them and not to teachers or older students.

In year 8, peer labeling is at work, targeting the "boffs," the "swots," and the "keenos," while teacher labeling tends to mark out the others. Students acknowledge that nonattendance is often the result of negative labeling by their peers, but it could also, of course, be the result of school sorting policies, particularly when students in the bottom sets believe that the "best teachers" (i.e., those who keep order and make the work interesting) are allocated to the higher sets. Labels that relate to poor academic achievement (unlike the labeling of physical or stylistic differences) lead some students to wear the badge with pride ("I'm rubbish at everything"), and even to group around the point of deficit—"We're the thickos." Once self-labeling becomes defiant, the behaviors are reinforced, and it is difficult for individuals to change or to abandon the group in order to change. Year 8 is a year that teachers think will look after itself, but, in fact, it needs to be given a more positive identity. It's a year when students whose motivation and confidence are fragile may turn away from learning.

YEAR 9

Year 9's identity in the English school system comes from the choosing of options—a powerfully engaging moment for young people who want more opportunity to exercise autonomy. But it's also an outward-looking year when students value trips and visits, which they can find more motivating than routine work in school. It's a year when, in the shadow of the two important years that lie ahead, some students begin to find gaps in their learning that they do not know how to fill. And they may not know how to respond to teachers' and parents' exhortations to "work harder."

A crucial task for year 9 teachers is sustaining a commitment to the seriousness of learning established in the early years of secondary schooling. Teachers are not helped in this task by a peer culture that promotes the view that the examination years (years 10 and 11) are somehow self-contained and have little relationship with what happens in the three preceding years:

> [It's] like the end of fourth year and beginning of fifth that you start doing stuff that counts, and it's got nowt to do with first, second, or third. . . . [You] might just as well have just come fourth and fifth [year] and have done with it. (Male, 15 years)
>
> It's a new year so you can start from scratch. (Male, 15 years)
>
> Well, I know like this year and next year are the most important years, and I've got to cram everything in. (Male, 15 years)

But some students wait until it's too late to establish work habits that will enable them to survive the pressures that lie ahead.

YEARS 10 AND 11

Some students, especially those more confident in themselves as learners, like the sharper sense of focus and purpose of years 10 and 11; but others react differently. At first, the attraction of studying self-selected subjects and a general sense of a more serious phase of work help some students who have become disengaged believe that they have a chance to come back on board. But the steep increase in the demands of school work and homework can prove to be too much. The sense of stress is sometimes acute, as the following comments suggest:

> I come home from school, do work, watch "Home and Away" and "Neighbours," then work. Eat my tea and work, go to bed and have nightmares about GCSE results. What a life! (Female, 15 years)
>
> The only time I see my friends out of school is Friday night. . . . basically I have no life and I often think there is no point in carrying on because life is so boring. . . . I'm finding it hard to cope. (Female, 15 years)

Extrinsic motivation may be high, but some students lack the capacity to analyze their own learner profiles and develop effective strategies to help them prepare for examinations (ways of memorizing information, making notes that summarize previous learning, etc.). The strategies they describe often reflect a limited understanding of the nature of the task. Some are clearly designed to reduce stress rather than maximize chances of success. The learning priority, at this stage in students' school careers, is to enhance the short-term memorizing of discrete "bits" of information. This will be their last serious encounter with formal education for some students; and the view of learning—and of themselves as learners—that they will take with them is a poor one.

Advantages and Disadvantages. As we talked to students, we became sharply aware that the demands of schoolwork in years 10 and 11 strengthen the socially constructed pattern of advantage and disadvantage. For instance, some students are disadvantaged by lack of access to "insider" knowledge or "know-how" (i.e., advice about how best to tackle revision is not available from their family); by the lack of good conditions, resources, and spaces for working at home; or by the nonavailability of out-of-school support in subject-related knowledge (e.g., some families can afford, and know how to find, subject-specific tutoring for their children). Some students also have heavy domestic responsibilities that make it additionally difficult for them to study at home:

> When I get home I do the washing, I load the washing machine, unload the washing machine, cook the dinner, sit down for 10 minutes on my homework. Then it's dinner out of the oven, serve it up. My dad comes in from work and that's it. It's gone—it's just housework—it's all I do. (Female, 15 years)

Students from families with a tradition of academic study are likely to have a greater awareness of the continuities and purposes of learning than students from families in which parents or caregivers are more concerned about the here and now of daily coping.

Regrets. We also noted the depth of the regrets that colored the interviews during this last year of compulsory schooling, and the fact that students mostly blamed themselves:

> I wish I'd have kept working a lot harder and actually got a thirst for learning. I just got lax. I think I saw just like how easy I could take it and just took the easy life. . . . (Male, 15 years)

> I were just running about like a little kid and not doing owt. I was really immature . . . and then it were like [this year] it hit me. . . . I could have tried harder but can't turn back time. (Female, 15 years)

> I missed loads of school, which was my own fault, and I'm suffering from that now. . . . I thought, "Oh, it doesn't matter, I can make up the work, but I didn't." I don't know what we're doing so it's a waste of time now. (Male, 15 years)

Another short extract reveals some of the false assumptions that can shape students' practices in the earlier years of schooling:

> When I think back I would have liked, you know, to start again because I realize now that there's been so much time that we've just wasted. Like when we say to each other, "Better start working" — something trivial would always crop up and that would be our main priority. . . . The [examinations] seemed years away and [I thought] that we'd be like so mature by then and we'd naturally have all *A*'s and that. But it didn't happen that way. (Male, 15 years)

Changing Images. Another issue that emerged strongly in the interviews was the difficulty students have freeing themselves from a negative image. The process involves not only managing their own disciplined change but also dissolving and reconstructing other people's expectations of them. Some students clearly thought that in moving from their primary school they could leave a "bad" image behind. They were not aware that reputations travel between primary and secondary teachers. But older students confronting a change of form or school were skeptical about the rhetoric of "making a fresh start." They knew that students and teachers in the receiving form or school were aware that only the "baddies" make such changes and that their reputation was therefore likely to travel with them.

Most students who had a poor reputation for both schoolwork and behavior said, in the privacy of the one-to-one interview, that they wanted to do well and realized that to succeed they had to develop new ways of working and a new image. But many things hold habit in place—including, in their view, the expectations of teachers and fellow students. For example, some students had a successful track record of converting work into play (Woods 1978). Early on in their school careers their fellow students applauded their antics, but then the situation changed. In years 10 and 11, when most students want the teacher to teach rather than to spend time disciplining the minority, those who have been unable to change from being a "dosser" to a "worker," from being a "joker" to someone who wants to be taken seriously, find themselves rejected by the students they had once entertained. They are, as a consequence, uncertain what to do:

> . . . you mess around . . . you get a reputation for yourself as a trouble causer and you can't lose it—it's like there. (Male, 15 years)

> I think trouble were with me when I come to school. I messed about from day one so people got me as a mess-abouter from day

> one so, like if I didn't mess about, "Oh, you're boring." You know what I mean? (Female, 15 years)

And as dividing practices (see Meadmore 1993) increase in school, along with the number of students excluded from schools, more young people resolve the tension surrounding their own progress and status by deciding that they are "in a good place but unable to succeed" (Stevenson and Ellsworth 1993, p. 266). This experience is easily transformed into what may be a lifelong perception that they are just "not the right kind of person."

The School Improvement Agenda

Many of the sources of advantage and disadvantage that lead to success or failure for students lie beyond the school's reach. But some things can be done to ensure that *all* students are well informed, understand what is at stake, and have the best support that the school can reasonably offer. Our analysis of the student interviews suggests that schools can improve by

- *Giving each year of secondary schooling a distinct identity* that might motivate students as they look ahead and that offers progress in terms of autonomy and responsibility.
- *Creating time for dialogue about learning* so that students begin to develop a language for thinking about learning and about themselves as learners.
- *Helping students explore standards for judging quality work in different subjects.*
- *Making time for teachers to talk individually with students* about problems with schoolwork and legitimating such discussion so that students do not feel that working and talking about work is not "cool."
- *Starting "futures" counseling in small groups* so young people are thinking realistically about how a commitment to learning and achievement can have a long-term influence on their prospects and possibilities.
- *Helping students understand what "working hard" or "working harder" means* in different subjects, what kind of effort it entails for different students, and the pay-offs.
- *Strengthening the procedures and practices relating to homework* (or "extra work"). Young people need time to themselves out of school (even when the pressures of revision are at their most intense), but it is also apparent that unless good work practices are established early on,

many students will be unable to cope with the sudden escalation of demand during the examination years.

- *Responding to the problem of "catching up" for students who have missed work* whether on occasional days or for longer periods and through illness or choice. Students who believe and act as if it is all right to miss sequences of learning may find later that they do not have a strong foundation to support more advanced work.
- *Helping students manage the multiple demands of homework, course work, and revision.*
- *Formalizing opportunities for students to support one another in learning.*
- *Offering lunch-hour or after-school clinics* in which students can ask about things they do not understand, catch up on things they have missed, and repeat sequences of work that they cannot grasp.

And the following are familiar enough but not always acted on characteristics of "good" teachers. According to the students we interviewed, the teachers most likely to increase commitment to learning are those who

- Enjoy teaching the subject.
- Enjoy teaching students.
- Make the lessons interesting and link them to life outside school.
- Will have a laugh but know how to keep order.
- Are fair.
- Are easy for students to talk to.
- Don't shout.
- Don't go on about things (e.g., how much better other classes are, or how much better an older brother and sister was).
- Explain things and go through things students don't understand without making them feel small.
- Don't give up on students.

All the fragments of testimony from our study are linked by a set of six principles fundamental to students' commitment to learning, to their confidence as learners, and to their images of themselves as learners as they move through the five years of compulsory secondary schooling. These six principles operate within and through organizational structures and relationships and together constitute what we call "the conditions of learning." They help students construct patterns of commitment and confidence. In a context in which some students are advantaged and some disadvantaged by social background factors, the conditions of learning are an important factor in equalizing opportunity.

The first three principles directly affect the student's sense of self-as-learner. The last three are more about what happens in and out of the classroom and suggest the importance of balancing risk-taking in schoolwork with confidence about one's self and one's image.

1. *The principle of respect for students* as individuals and as a body occupying a significant position in the school.
2. *The principle of fairness* to all students irrespective of their class, gender, ethnicity, or academic status.
3. *The principle of autonomy* (not as an absolute state but as both a right and a responsibility in relation to physical and social maturity).
4. *The principle of intellectual challenge* that helps students to experience learning as a dynamic, engaging, and empowering activity.
5. *The principle of social support* in relation to both academic and emotional concerns.
6. *The principle of security* in relation to both the physical setting of the school and in interpersonal relations and encounters (including anxiety about threats to students' self-esteem).

These six principles are not novel and are likely to be featured in most schools' aims statements, but they are important because they give weight and color to the institutional regimes that define what a "student" is, determine the regularities of learning, and, crucially, exert a powerful influence on young people's senses of themselves as learners and, consequently, on their purposefulness in learning and their pattern of achievement. These principles, expressed at such a level of familiar abstraction, can easily be passed over. But the words of the students themselves help to fix them in our consciousness. Take autonomy, for instance. Throughout the five years of secondary schooling, students repeatedly refer to their need to be treated in a more adult way:

> When you join the big school when you're a first year, you can feel a difference from the junior school. Then when you move up to a second year, you can feel even more difference. They let you do more things. (Male, 11 years)

> It's more exciting at this school I think because there is more to do. The teachers really rely on you to do things and when you do them you feel really good about it. (Male, 12 years)

> Now we're older . . . we get looked at more maturely by the teachers. And also the first years look up to us as well—that's quite nice! (Female, 13 years)

> The one thing I hate about school is being treated like a three-year old. I want to feel like an adult. (Female, 14 years)

> Work experience made me look at my future, and it were a lot different to school. They [the employers] treated me like an adult, and it were good. It were really good the way they treated me. Made me see what working were like. (Male, 15 years)

> I feel more adult in year 11 with us being the oldest and looking down at the others. And then one of the teachers will come along, and you like look up at them and think, "No. I'm not an adult yet!" (Female, 15 years)

As Freeman (1983, p. 10) has said, emerging notions of "childhood" led to a situation where children "had to be subjected to a special sort of treatment, a sort of quarantine, before they were allowed to join adult society," and schools became the institutional focus of that period of "quarantine." But as the period of quarantine was extended from 14 to 15 and then to 16 years to reflect changes in economic and labor-market conditions, so, within the world of the school, "the adolescent was separated from the adult and confused with the child" (Aries 1962, p. 262; quoted by Freeman, 1983, p. 12). Schools, it seems, may be holding students too long in the quarantine of childhood.

CHANGING THE CONDITIONS OF LEARNING: A KEY TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

For a long time now, educators have relied on changes to curriculum and pedagogy as the key to school improvement. Recently, educators have focused on the need for coherent schoolwide policies and an explicit, even slogan-like, commitment to high expectations and achievement. But, despite all this, little attention has been given to the regimes of schooling and their influence on the conditions of learning as young people experience them. Over the last 20 years, schools have changed less in their basic structures and relationship patterns than young people have changed.

The conditions of learning in schools do not always reflect the social maturity of young people nor the tensions they feel as they struggle to reconcile the development of their social selves with the development of their identity as learners. Out of school, many young people find themselves involved in complex relationships and situations within the family or peer group. Many carry tough responsibilities, balancing multiple roles and often finding themselves dealing with conflicting loyalties.

Films, songs, and youth magazines have an increasing readiness to take up and explore many of the tensions of the adolescent world. In contrast, the structures of secondary schooling offer less responsibility and autonomy than many young people are accustomed to in their lives outside school, and less opportunity for learning-related tensions to be opened up and explored. The traditional exclusion of young people from the consultative processes, the bracketing out of their voice, is founded upon an outdated view of childhood that fails to acknowledge children's capacity to reflect on issues affecting their lives. The need to take student perspectives into account when planning school improvement is pressing.

What students say about teaching, learning, and schooling speaks directly to the dilemmas they experience as they try to commit themselves to learning in the face of competing pressures from the world outside school and institutional regimes that neither reflect the increasing maturity of young people in the 1990s nor support all students in developing positive identities as a learners. It's tough being a teacher in the 1990s—trying to engage the minds of young people against the backdrop of enhanced social and sexual maturity, poverty, and long-term unemployment. But it's also tough being a student.

Our interviews with students in English secondary schools confirm Phelan and his colleagues' (1992, p. 696; see also Phelan, Cao, and Davidson 1994, p. 429) observation that most students "from all achievement levels and socio-cultural backgrounds want to succeed and want to be in an environment in which it is possible to do so." Behind the public mask of nonchalance or "coolness" some students wear to hide their anxiety about the future is a desire to do well and some realization of the consequences of not making the grade. We owe it to these students to take seriously what they can tell us about learning and to use it as a basis for change. Article 12 of the *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child* states that "the child capable of forming [his or her] own views shall be assured the right to express those views freely, on all matters affecting him or her, and these will be given weight in accordance with the child's age" (see Gersch et al. 1993, pp. 38 and 44). Hargreaves (1996, p. 12) has said that "the concern with *voice* has come to have special relevance for the place teachers occupy and the role they play in school restructuring and reform." The same should be true for students.

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5

Teachers, Time, and School Reform

Nancy E. Adelman
Karen Panton Walking-Eagle

> Identifying and finding time within the contracted school day to talk, to plan, to create, to be a lifelong learner, and to teach gnaws at me constantly.

These are the words of an experienced teacher who has spent the past several years working with colleagues to establish a new school in a major city. His self-selected metaphor for his professional life is "teacher-as-juggler." Some readers of this quotation might comment on the fact that the position of "and to teach" at the end of the sentence makes it seem almost an afterthought—the least important of this teacher's concerns about the finiteness of time. This is accurate, in a sense, because it's a given that he will teach every day of the work week. Children will come to school, and he will teach them. It is finding time for the other activities in the series—collaborative planning, substantive discussions, professional development—that keeps him

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and his colleagues struggling. We heard echoes of their problem frequently during our four-year study of the uses of time for teaching and learning.

Our study examined various strategies for restructuring time resourcefully to improve the educational experience. Much of our research focused on assessing the effects these innovations have had on students. However, early on in our work, we concluded that "the implementation of time-related innovations in schools reverberates through many aspects of school life, including the professional lives—and sometimes personal lives—of the teachers who work in them" (Adelman, Haslam, and Pringle 1995).

The pervasiveness of the time-related effects of educational reform on teachers' professional and personal lives became evident as we interviewed school staff and observed classrooms and school activities during our site visits to the 14 schools in our study. As a result, we developed a study component that allowed a group of teachers from several schools to come together for discussion and reflection on time as a variable in the school reform context. *Teachers' Uses of Time in the Context of Reform: A Casebook of Teacher Experiences* (Adelman and Walking-Eagle, in press) emerged from this activity. It contains personal accounts prepared by teachers, which illustrate the extent to which reform efforts have been constrained to varying degrees by the time-related pressures imposed on teachers.

The struggles and tensions that the authors of the case book and other teachers interviewed for our study grapple with every day center around time-related issues during the three stages of the change process. At the outset of a reform effort, teachers need time to *learn about and practice* the new behaviors that will be expected of them, whether the reforms are imposed from above or organically developed at the school level. At a middle stage—usually called implementation—teachers need time to *introduce and institutionalize* the new strategies fully into ongoing daily life in the school and the classroom. Finally, because of the fragility of the change process, teachers need time to *reflect* on the reform initiative, assess its outcomes, and keep moving on the school improvement continuum.

In this chapter, we share teachers' and other educators' perspectives on the time dilemmas associated with these three stages of reform and our own observations about structures and strategies that seem to help resolve certain aspects of the time conundrum—at least under some circumstances and in certain contexts.

TIME DILEMMAS IN THE SCHOOL REFORM CONTEXT

Each school we visited for our study structured the time for teaching and learning differently than the "typical" American school. While none of the schools had consciously organized their reform efforts around time-related factors, the manipulation of time had at some point become a dependent variable in the school improvement process for each. The reform contexts in which individual school faculties labored varied widely. Some schools were in states in which statewide reform mandates affected all districts and schools, and some of these mandates specified strong accountability components, including penalties for schools that did not improve. Other schools were pilot sites for district reform initiatives. A few were unique, one-of-a-kind alternative schools. In addition, most of the schools were involved with some form of site-based decision making, which placed additional claims on teachers' time. Despite the contextual differences, we found that the time-related dilemmas teachers articulated were similar, as were many of the curricular and instructional innovations they were considering or actually implementing.

GETTING STARTED: TIME TO PLAN AND PRACTICE

> I believe people need time to accept and adapt to change, and to practice any new skills that are required.

The "people" to whom the teacher quoted here is referring are teachers. The ultimate goal of reform is improved student learning, but important intermediate steps on the way to this goal involve teacher learning. Too often, the time and other resources allocated for teachers to learn and become comfortable with new strategies, structures, or content is inadequate or nonexistent. The change process leapfrogs from an extensive planning, design, or policy development stage to an implementation stage, neglecting the preparation stage. This omission can occur whether the reform strategy involves top-down mandates, bottom-up restructuring, or the invention of a completely new school from scratch. Frequently, inadequate attention to preparation and practice seems to be the key ingredient in reform failure. As one teacher observed, "In my 23 years of teaching I have [often] seen reforms get ahead of teacher preparation."

From the teacher's perspective, the need to come to terms with new ideas and practice new behaviors seems to be particularly critical when the reform in question is related to instruction. Many of the schools we visited were in the process of implementing at least one, and frequently several, of the following instruction-related reforms:

- Multi-age classrooms.
- Team teaching.
- Heterogeneous student/teacher instructional clusters (houses, pods, families, etc.).
- Thematic interdisciplinary curriculums.
- Authentic student assessments.
- Greater use of technology in the classroom.

Each of these reforms requires teachers to organize and conduct day-to-day, week-to-week, and month-to-month instruction in ways quite different from the norm. Many teachers do not initially have confidence in or commitment to the validity of these reforms. They need time to understand the purposes of the innovations, to read the research literature on the student outcomes that might be expected if the innovations are implemented, to discuss the proposed new strategies with other teachers, to observe the strategies in action if possible, and to practice using the innovations themselves in a risk-free environment. Typically, however, the decision to introduce change is swiftly followed by a full-blown implementation stage. Opportunities for training and practice are frequently inadequate or ill-structured for the serious business of changing ingrained behaviors. Evidence from our case studies suggests that even when professional development is widely available, the tendency is often to offer it at times and in ways that create unintentional stress for teachers.

One West Coast school district illustrated the preparation/implementation dilemma particularly well. Teachers there complained that the arrival of a new superintendent brought an influx of new programs and expectations for teachers. The rapid-fire introduction of innovations included heterogeneous grouping, thematic integrated curriculum, a test preparation program, and daily reporting to parents, among other things. One teacher reported that "as the quantity of the new programs increased, the quality of the implementation process for each program decreased." Another noted that "the majority of teachers were overwhelmed by the magnitude of the changes and by the pace with which they were expected to implement them."

A saving grace for some teachers in this district was that many of its schools operate on a four-track, year-round schedule designed to accommodate burgeoning enrollment by keeping school buildings in full operation at all times. Teachers and students assigned to each track attend school for 45 days and then have a 15-day intersession. However, teachers may opt to teach during their break or "off-track" period at a special 15-day intersession program for students who need additional academic assistance. Here, in a more relaxed setting and with smaller class sizes, teachers can practice new teaching techniques and try new curriculum in a relatively stress-free environment before introducing these innovations into their regular classes. The intersession program administrator noted that the program serves as a "fertile practice ground" and "a risk-free environment" for teachers, who are never evaluated on their intersession performances. In fact, the district often pilots new instructional techniques and curriculum materials during the program before introducing them districtwide.

Unfortunately, only a few teachers can work during the intersession, so a large number of teachers miss the opportunity to "practice." Still, participating schools have the advantage of a core cadre of teachers who have established some self-confidence in using new materials and teaching in new ways, and these teachers can be a resource for their peers during the change process. Notably, although the intersession program's value to students and teachers is recognized, the program is always threatened during the annual district budget battles. Its supporters fear that even this limited opportunity for preparation and practice will soon disappear.

TIME FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Time pressures are particularly acute when reform agendas include an expectation that teachers will create curriculum. During our fieldwork, integrated thematic curriculum was a nearly universal buzz phrase in elementary and middle schools. Sometimes this approach to presenting content in a cross-disciplinary fashion had been officially adopted as district policy, although district curriculum guidelines or frameworks had generally not been revised accordingly to provide teachers with a road map. More often, the integrated thematic approach was adopted at the school level or even by certain teams of teachers within schools. In all cases, however, a commitment to interdisciplinary curriculum integration caused a great scramble among teachers to prepare new instructional units.

An interesting assumption implicit in the popularity of thematic interdisciplinary curriculum is that teachers know how to be curriculum developers and, with little or no preparation or practice, can create instructional units that link discrete subject areas, convey accurate information, motivate students, and align with the district or state-mandated tests used to evaluate school and classroom performance. We found much enthusiasm in the schools for the concept of thematic interdisciplinary curriculum but considerable dismay about where to begin.

Of all the reforms we observed, involvement in curriculum design and development seemed to produce the greatest amount of time-related stress and frustration for teachers. About his life as a teacher in a new community-based alternative middle school, one teacher wrote:

> Our curriculum is teacher-designed, teacher-written, and teacher-implemented—no textbooks. . . . My colleagues and I are always planning, creating, writing, and piloting new curriculum. I have become a master at curriculum evolution. I change assignments continually. . . . Nevertheless, sometimes I think this incessant curriculum innovation is a kind of insanity. It certainly takes time.

Because this school literally invented itself with students present, and its teachers have voluntarily given up district contractual planning time in exchange for smaller class size, virtually all of the curriculum development work takes place off the clock—not a very realistic situation. In fact, the school experienced a 67 percent faculty turnover rate in each of its first two years of operation, and at least one teacher interviewed attributed this phenomenon to one major design flaw: a lack of preparation time prior to the launching of the innovative program.

At another award-winning middle school in an eastern city where reading, writing, and mathematics are taught across the curriculum, an extended school day and scheduling innovations theoretically provide teaching teams with three common planning periods per day for developing the academic program. Further, at this school, each team has a nonteaching coordinator to handle contact with families, facilitate team planning, and manage discipline issues. Despite this rather incredible support for engaging teachers in curriculum development work, the time available is almost never used for this purpose. Other needs and concerns, such as discussion of students' academic and behavioral progress or parent-teacher conferences, always seem to be more pressing, according to one of the teachers who had explicitly joined the faculty because of the opportunity to create curriculum. This teacher concluded that the prospect of curriculum development was simply too overwhelming for most of his team colleagues to contemplate. They didn't know where to begin.

According to this teacher, a critical turning point came when a district mandate called for all schools to create a two-week interdisciplinary curriculum on world hunger. Given a limited time frame and an identified theme (and, of course, the district's command), he "heard more teachers extolling the virtues of interdisciplinary curriculum planning. Awareness was growing among us that, rather than just adapting a prefabricated curriculum, we could create and tailor curriculums to the interests and needs of our students." The world hunger exercise provided the teachers with a first step and the practice that they needed to gain confidence in their ability to develop curriculum.

TIME TO TURN POLICY INTO PRACTICE

From a policy perspective, the importance of building in adequate time for preparation and practice when major reforms are mandated should never be underestimated. Stress levels among teachers are particularly high when failure to implement the reforms in question carries penalties. One teacher described the confusion, frustration, and, ultimately, anger that she and others in her district experienced when they tried to respond to a state requirement to implement portfolio assessment as part of the school accountability system. Not only were "answers [to questions about portfolios] hard to come by . . .[and] training and other support limited," but the document the state department had published as a guide for teachers "outlined only the barest essentials of the new assessment."

Add to this the fact that students hated the portfolio development process and knew that they personally would never be judged by the quality of the work in their portfolios, and it is little wonder that this teacher refers to this portion of her professional life as "portfolio prison." According to her, the school year "passed in a blur," with the intended benefits of the reform not realized in her classroom. It was not until the second and third year of the program, after she'd had the opportunity to attend workshops on the topic and collaborate in depth with colleagues, that she'd made any significant progress in her understanding of portfolio assessment and how it could ultimately benefit her students.

Interestingly, we visited another school in the same state and found that the new mandates caused hardly a ripple of concern among teachers. The reason is that this school, with considerable outside assistance, had been restructuring itself for several years prior to the state reform legislation. For these teachers, the state's actions affirmed decisions they had already made on their own. This school, often cited as a restructuring success story, benefited greatly from the wisdom of its principal, who wooed reluctant staff into acceptance of change with an explicit "hold harmless" period for experimentation—that is, a period of time during which teachers could try new instructional strategies outside of the normal accountability structures of the school and district. The principal also negotiated an agreement with the faculty stipulating that if teachers were unhappy with the outcomes after a year, the reform agenda would be dropped. Obviously, this did not occur. Fear of change is history at this school, which is now committed to a continuous improvement process.

As observers of school reform, the importance of time to plan and practice prior to full-blown implementation seems obvious to us. No one would get up on stage at a piano recital without having played the piece of music many times. Why would anyone agree to perform professional responsibilities using unfamiliar instructional materials, strategies, and technologies? Under those conditions, the rational thing to do is close the classroom door and continue with what has been practiced. We are unlikely to reach a critical mass in education reform unless the essential truth of this lesson is widely understood.

IMPLEMENTATION WOES: THE MIDDLE TIME IN SCHOOL REFORM

> Like us, teachers in many schools . . . find themselves too busy bailing out the water to plug the leak in the boat.

More often than not, the implementation phase of an education reform initiative is an amorphous period between the time when a limited number of risk-taking teachers in a school have adopted and practiced an innovation and the time when the reform fizzles and loses steam, frequently to be replaced by a new initiative. If the risk-takers like the results of the strategies, they will continue to employ them. But rarely in the history of education reform have innovations reached a stage that could truthfully be called full implementation or institutionalization. This is a curious phenomenon in schools.

Our case studies show that some reform-minded educators have learned from the research on abortive reform efforts and are approaching the school change process with more realistic mindsets about the length of the so-called implementation phase and support structures for their more reluctant colleagues. Even where this is the case, however, teachers articulate bothersome, time-related concerns that constantly interfere with their sustained commitment to and enthusiasm for change.

Most of the schools we studied can be accurately described as restructured or restructuring in terms of reorganization of the school day, reduced teacher isolation, increased teacher decision making (Peterson, McCarthey, and Elmore 1996, p. 120), and substantial efforts to implement classroom practices that meet students' learning needs and improve educational outcomes. Several were, to use Andy Hargreaves' term, *recultured* in the sense that organizational norms and behaviors seemed very different from those of the typical American school. Many had carefully documented evidence that student outcomes had improved as a result of the restructuring. In some, innovation and reform are ongoing and extensive, touching on various aspects of school life. For example, the same teacher whose metaphor for his professional life is "teacher-as-juggler" described his school as

> an alternative, downtown middle school that prides itself on being student-centered, experiential, community-based, project-oriented, and highly computerized. We operate as a site-based management school.

The comprehensiveness of the reform task that he and his colleagues undertook—the literal creation of a brand new school that would simultaneously model all of the reform strategies being touted in the early 1990s—was overwhelming.

Though teachers may be knowledgeable and fully capable of fulfilling their responsibilities, the sheer volume of work often required in an increasing number of areas forces them to perform a juggling act daily. As a result, time, rather than competence or ability, is often the key issue. As a colleague of the "juggler" aptly stated: "I can *do* anything, but I can't do *everything*," a realization she came to several years after plunging wholeheartedly into the creation of this innovative school setting—her first teaching job. Her conclusion is that innovation is a kind of addiction for many teachers, which ultimately can make them sick of their jobs. She told us that "by my third year of teaching, I was angry, exhausted, frustrated, and resentful. I knew that the quality of my work was mediocre because I was so tired." This teacher suggests that there should be mechanisms built into the reform context to alert innovators when they are becoming overextended. She has a good point. While many reforms have floundered when they could not produce measurable results in a short time frame, many others have sunk from the exhaustion of those swimming upstream. In the end, our new teacher ponders whether or not she should move on.

TIME TO BE A "TEACHER"

One very specific, time-related problem that arises for many teachers in sustaining continuous school improvement is the tension caused by expanding the definition of what it means to be a teacher. In the old paradigm, teachers were almost exclusively in their classrooms teaching students. In the new one, teachers are instructors, but they are also leaders, mentors, curriculum developers, and staff developers. This brings about the need to set priorities and make choices. For many teachers, the choice is often a "Catch-22," as they are forced to compromise their work in one area in order to fulfill equally important responsibilities in another. For example, some teachers have noted that to take advantage of professional development opportunities, they must spend time away from their students—sometimes for extended periods. One teacher in our study described the guilt she experienced, particularly when parents started to complain about her frequent absences. Nevertheless, she remains convinced that workshops and other training sessions are important because they allow her to reinvigorate herself and acquire the knowledge and information she needs to improve her effectiveness in the classroom. This teacher hopes to help parents realize that they need "to understand the changes that are going on in their children's classrooms and to know that teachers who are prepared to work with these changes are going to provide better education for their children."

Other teachers describe how they were forced to make different tradeoffs. For example, one teacher, who prefers to develop and tailor his own curriculum to meet specific student interests and needs rather than relying on a textbook, worries that this time-consuming task has made it too difficult for him to reserve additional time to learn and practice instructional techniques for moving beyond teacher-centered teaching. Another, who is committed to guiding the school reform process through her involvement in administrative and governance issues, expresses regret that she is unable to spend more time in individual, after-school consultation with students and parents because her leadership responsibilities fully occupy her nonclassroom time. However teachers choose to use their time during the implementation process, they seem torn about their lack of attention to something. Thus, our own experience with restructuring schools confirms Hargreaves and Tucker's (1991) theoretical observations concerning the guilt factor in teachers' professional lives. In particular, guilt can stem from what these authors call the "persona of perfectionism," namely a professional culture that often constrains teachers from acknowledging that they can't do everything simultaneously and exceptionally well.

TIME TO SHARE SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES

Even when an entire faculty has agreed upon a school improvement plan, there is constant danger of momentum loss during the implementation phase. The early risk-takers who possess the self-motivation and energy to model or pilot new classroom practices can become frustrated and tired of urging colleagues to follow in their footsteps. For example, two teachers at a school in the Southwest volunteered to pilot a new approach to bilingual education for their colleagues. They spent many weekends and evenings conducting research and developing materials for a bilingual teaching strategy that involves placing dominant English-speaking and dominant Spanish-speaking children in the same classroom with two teachers fluent in both languages. Instruction is in both languages with the aim that both groups of students become bilingual.

Although everyone in the school is impressed with what their program has accomplished with low-achieving students, the two teachers have had no success in persuading others to implement the same program in their own classrooms. They speculate that one of the main reasons for this reluctance is that there is a "lack of understanding of how the program works in practice *and* a lack of opportunity and time to learn about the development and implementation process." They add, "Not everyone is willing or able to sacrifice their personal time—as we did—to this endeavor." These may indeed be the reasons that this innovation has failed to spread through the school. However, it is worth noting that this school is in a state where schools and teachers have tremendous accountability pressures. Preparing students for state tests that carry sanctions and rewards eats up time that might otherwise be devoted to the implementation of an innovative instructional approach that everyone seems to agree was successful.

TIME TO "SELL" THE INNOVATION

More audiences become aware of school change as it progresses through the implementation period. During the planning stage, the direction of change is the exclusive property of the planners. As the elements of the reform make their way into an increasing number of classrooms or the whole school, many people start to take note. At that point, resistance to reform can come from any number of places. Teachers at an alternative high school with a competency-based and highly interdisciplinary curriculum told us that the main opposition to their innovative approach comes from students. "The more innovative we are [in terms of instruction], the more they balk," said one administrator, who continued that "it is a constant challenge to convince them [the students] that they are learning. Interdisciplinary courses take a real selling job from the faculty. The students want to take classes with the traditional names that they associate with high school."

Clearly, many time-related struggles and barriers accompany the implementation phase of the school improvement process. Listening to teachers talk about these things and observing the one-step forward, two-steps back lurches of reform, raises the question, "If it is so difficult and frustrating, why bother?" Part of the answer likely lies in the addiction metaphor quoted earlier. But it is more than that. Successes with students, bonds built with colleagues, and laudatory articles in the newspaper, at least for awhile, are rewarding enough to keep implementation rolling and make the time invested seem worthwhile. We often think of one school—10 years into the restructuring process—where teachers reported that once they were thoroughly acclimated to the team teaching and interdisciplinary curriculums that they as a faculty selected as reform strategies, they actually saved one another time by sharing lessons, units, and materials. It did become easier over time.

FRAGILE PROGRESS: TIME FOR VIGILANCE

> This type of program will continue to innovate and change, requiring resiliency and continued investments of time and energy on the part of teachers. Can I keep up my end of things? I don't know.

Experienced teachers told us that even when a critical mass of a school's faculty eventually adopts and successfully implements change in structures and practices, the change process does not end. Indeed, in schools that embrace the idea of continuous improvement, reform may be endless. Unlike many recent studies of restructuring schools, our study included many schools that had restructured long before there was a restructuring movement. Their 10 to 20 years of experience in maintaining their visions of good practice show us that the *passage of time*, in combination with demonstrated success with students, can be as hazardous to mature reform efforts as a shortage of time is in the early stage of change efforts. Time to assess and adjust to changing conditions and circumstances must be built into the change system to avoid backsliding. Even institutionalized reform efforts require vigilance to ensure their continued success.

We described earlier one middle school teacher's concerns about the lack of attention to interdisciplinary curriculum development during common planning time ostensibly set aside for this purpose. This teacher reflected at length about why, several years into implementation, this aspect of the school's reform vision had stalled. He concluded that, while many things at his school had been transformed, he and his colleagues were not yet far enough removed from an old paradigm to become complacent about their use of available planning time. It remained far too easy to revert to patterns of isolation. To avoid this and keep implementation moving forward, this teacher asserted that "reform and innovation . . . must be reclaimed year-to-year, and sometimes month-to-month." This process takes time, however—time to assess, time to redesign, and time to get back on track. If this stage is neglected, the teacher noted, "slippage into old and familiar patterns of behavior . . . [will be as likely] as genuine progress."

In this teacher's middle school, thematic integrated curriculum was only one of a number of innovations associated with program restructuring. Other elements had been fully implemented, and student outcome measures (test scores, attendance) improved dramatically. Over a five- or six-year period, this school rose from the bottom in its district to stardom—without integrating its curriculum. To the teacher quoted above, who believed strongly in the value of interdisciplinarity, this represented a failure of the reform effort. It was not clear to us, however, that other faculty members shared this teacher's concern about the failure to use planning time for curriculum development. In fact, two administrators had quite conflicting views about how to resolve the situation. One took the position that teachers and teams should determine their own priorities for use of the time set aside for collaborative planning. The other maintained that curriculum development is so central to the school's overall reform plan that administration should ensure that it occurs. Our view is that, in light of its successes and how they were achieved, this school is ripe for a serious revisiting of each element of its original reform vision. Faculty and administrators need to ask hard questions about priorities, including allocations of time to time-consuming enterprises. Is an interdisciplinary curriculum still a priority for the majority of staff? If so, how can its development be guaranteed? If not, what does this mean for continued commitment to the school by faculty who believe strongly in interdisciplinarity? The point is that reform is never "done." New decisions will always have to be made.

When we began our study of the uses of time for teaching and learning, we would not have hypothesized that the success of a restructuring effort could ultimately threaten its continued forward progress. However, this proved to be the case in a surprising number of instances—particularly among the most mature programs. For example, one teacher, writing about a small alternative high school for students in danger of dropping out, described how changing circumstances led to the erosion of the shared decision making and leadership that had been central to the school's vision and a source of great pride for those who worked there. After several successful years, and largely because of its success, this particular school merged with another program and rapidly became a much larger institution. Several structural, organizational, and personnel changes accompanied this growth (e.g., a larger staff and a lack of understanding of—and, perhaps, commitment to—shared decision making among new faculty). Over time, "faculty meetings degenerated into two hours of announcements and general housekeeping" and the "collaborative decision making," which had been a hallmark of the school, became a thing of the past. In this teacher's view, the return to a "more autocratic approach to school governance" could have been avoided if the faculty had been able to "secure time to discuss, debate, and redesign a new model of site-based decision making" that could have been sustained in the new, larger school context.

Our site visitor to this school, though, did not find the governance situation quite as draconian as described by the teacher. What began as a program with 3 teachers and 40 students is now a full-blown school with more than 30 teachers and 600 students—a school that fills an important educational need in its small Midwestern city, but that is inevitably more bureaucratic than the original storefront operation. Obviously, some intimacy has been lost. Nevertheless, many elements of shared decision making remain evident. Friday mornings are reserved for an extended meeting of the whole faculty, during which there are announcements but there is also time for substantive talk about students and faculty presentations. In addition, a faculty committee interviews prospective teachers and makes all hiring decisions, and all decisions about curriculum and instruction are in the faculty's hands as well.

None of this, however, negates the teacher's perception that, after a number of years of change, something of the original vision has been lost. The passage of time and events inevitably creates new circumstances. Even when the educational news is good, the trajectory that a change process takes may not suit everyone who originally set out on the journey. Then, too, some people are by nature trailblazers. When the path becomes too well-worn, these people need to strike off in a new direction. Over the years, the relationship between pioneers—like the disappointed teacher quoted above—and mainstream education has been a fruitful one. Today, for example, we recognize the value of restructuring time in schools because of small-scale experiments with educational alternatives like the storefront that grew into a large school.

Erosion of a dream bothered another teacher in our study, although the circumstances were different. A veteran teacher in a 20-year-old alternative middle school in a large city recounted a series of district policy changes that had gradually constrained the innovative practices he and his colleagues had been implementing for years. Ironically, one major constraint came when the district mandated site-based management. This school, under a special state authority for experimental schools, had successfully and quietly modeled the site-based decision-making concept for years, using its autonomy to manipulate time for adequate teacher collaboration and planning. When site-based management became a buzzword and a policy, the school was required to submit a plan for approval by a committee of district and union officials. Its plan, which summarized the established decision-making procedures at the school, was initially rejected. The plan finally approved gave the school less flexibility over time use than it had previously enjoyed. One teacher who took early retirement out of frustration wrote: "There is a sense that we do not control our time or our program as we used to. The pressure mounts on us to do great things without the time to do them well."

The lesson to be learned from this story should be a sobering one for policymakers: institutionalization of a good thing through policy can be hazardous to the previously fine health of an individual organization. This is a central conundrum for education reform. We, as educators, are excited when we find examples of innovative and successful practice in a small number of places. We want others to know about these places and to use similar approaches. However, in our zeal to scale-up innovation, we codify and homogenize it, inevitably introducing conditions that did not apply in the original experiments, where time and experience shaped practice.

CONCLUSION

As we conducted our study of the uses of time for teaching and learning, we kept a running list of time clichés—ways in which we use the word without really giving much thought to its philosophical or conceptual meaning in our lives. Time is of the essence. Making the most of our time. There's no time to waste. Timely ideas. Time to go. Just in time. The list got very long. For most of us, time permeates and controls our lives through schedules, appointments, seasons, and life's rites of passage. Generally, we're in a rut when it comes to our use of time. Our days, weeks, and months are programmed, and we flow through them happily or sadly, relaxed or, all too often, stressed out. Usually, we become conscious of how we use our time only when we want or need to make major adjustments to our lifestyles or workstyles. Then we think about how we can "find time" or "make time" or "cut time in half."

The schools we visited and the teachers we met had jumped their ruts and were making major adjustments in their workstyles. Time was, therefore, front and center as a finite resource and often a barrier to the reform agenda and professional practice. All of the schools were using instructional time differently than is the norm—they were selected for that reason and for the explicit purpose of examining the potential of altered time use for improved student outcomes. What we did not necessarily foresee at the outset of the study was the profound effect that intense reform agendas and structural changes based on time would have on teachers' lives in the workplace.

Incorporating time up front in the change process for teachers to study new materials, practice new instructional techniques, and weigh the possibilities of new organizational arrangements is a critically important step in successful school reform efforts, but one that is more often than not given short shrift. The all-too-common pattern in educational reform has been and continues to be a leap from a planning phase involving policymakers and perhaps a limited number of practitioners to an expectation of full-blown implementation and documentation of positive results within two or three years. As several educators associated with our study pointed out, learning new things (which is really what change is) just doesn't happen that way—for children or for adults. One perceptive building administrator noted:

> Those seeking to implement change must acknowledge that all individuals (including teachers) learn at different rates. In the case of a school district, the [change] process should accommodate among individual teachers the range of differences in their ability to adapt to new teaching methods and classroom routines.

Common sense dictates that all of us who want world-class schools and want them now must heed. If we don't allow for different rates of change, we are likely to get no change at all.

The implementation stage—whether it comes right away or after a decent interval for planning and practice—has its own perils. This is the time when reform enthusiasts may go too fast, try to do too much, and wear themselves out. It is also the time when change and innovation go public whether or not practitioners have had the opportunity to polish their performances. It can be a dangerous time, but it does not have to be. Reform seems to have a better chance of staying on track when the pace of change and the expectations or standards that teachers set for themselves are kept reasonable. A number of the schools we studied had been working on improvement for many years. Others, however, were on a faster track and under greater external pressure to show results quickly. The latter were places where we found stress, guilt, and frustration.

It seems unlikely that policymakers will stop mandating change, thus reducing external pressure, any time soon. However, they are only part of the issue. When in reform mode, many teachers have a tendency to hold themselves to standards and schedules that are higher than those around them expect. For example, we asked a parent to comment on the case prepared by the teacher who felt guilty about the times when her reform work kept her away from her classroom. The parent praised the teacher for that time, which was spent educating parents about the importance of professional growth and "fresh new ideas for [the] classrooms." Similarly, in a situation where a state law mandated portfolio assessments at certain grade levels (with rewards and sanctions attached), one teacher's perceptions of the speed with which this new accountability structure would actually be invoked was quite different from the expectations of a state policymaker who acknowledged that full implementation would take time.

The third time stage in the educational reform context is the extension of relatively short-term plans for change and reform into a long-term mindset of continuous improvement. Our sample of schools deliberately included several that were extremely mature by the standards of typical reform implementation efforts. What we found in these sites, however, was not a "look to us to see how it is done" attitude. Rather, the experience of fairly radical experimentation had developed in the faculty at these schools a habit of reflection and self-criticism—sometimes, it seemed to us, hyper-criticism—that kept the reform spirit alive. All of these schools could prove that they were successful with students, some of them with populations typically described as highly at risk of school failure. Yet staff continued to learn and change, and to refine and restructure their curriculum, instruction, and relationships with students and one another. From two of the mature sites, however, we learned that success can backfire as the scaling up of a proven reform strategy to a policy level can actually restrict innovative schools with well-inculcated habits of continuous improvement. It is the experiences of these schools—as much as 20 years into reform—that caused us to think of progress as a fragile commodity. Even successful educational reforms can clearly remain vulnerable for a very long time.

ENDNOTE

In recent months, time seems to have moved from the background to the foreground of issues requiring attention in the educational reform context. We are continuing our own exploration of teacher time issues through another study funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Planning and Evaluation Service. For this new study, we have explicitly sought out schools where elementary teachers have more overall planning time than the norm and where scheduling innovations allow significant portions of that time to be used collaboratively. In addition, we are looking for transportable ideas about the use of teachers' time in Germany and Japan. The stories that emerge from this study will be particularly applicable to the issues that we have raised in this chapter about planning, practicing, and sustaining innovation.

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6

Failing Schools or Failing Systems?

KATE MYERS AND HARVEY GOLDSTEIN

There seems to be a lot of failure about: failing schools, failing teachers, failing children. Headline writers love it, politicians use it to shift responsibility, and the recipients of the label often have little choice but to internalize the notion. Hunting the failing school has become an exciting and rewarding political pastime. When the quarry is identified, it can be savaged and publicly humiliated. For example, when an official body identified a school in the United Kingdom as "failing," a national newspaper ran the headline "Is this the worst school in Britain?" (Brace 1994).

Failure in some form or another exists in all educational systems: a search for remedies is always necessary, and complacency is never acceptable. Nevertheless, in many systems there is great pressure on teachers, available resources are decreasing, and student motivation seems to be lessening in the face of decreasing job opportunities. It should come as no surprise if various parts of the system find it difficult to cope.

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In this chapter, we look at the political and ideological contexts within which the ethos of failure has blossomed. We describe what happens to schools that are publicly labeled as failing and argue that the performance of schools (including those deemed to be "failing") cannot be evaluated properly or fairly unless the different contexts in which these schools and their teachers work are taken into account. Those who identify "failure" must depend on available information to describe school performance. The principle of "freedom of information" can be an asset here, but it can also be abused in ways that harm rather than help schools and the children they serve. It is therefore crucial to use such information responsibly. In this chapter, we propose a system and some guidelines for ensuring that the ideal of "freedom of information" is not abused when information about schools is published.

Our motivation for writing this chapter is based largely on our experiences in England and Wales, but given the preoccupation with "failing" schools in Tennessee, Maryland, Kentucky, and many other parts of the United States, we believe it has important lessons for American educators as well.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

In the last 20 years, many educational systems have been exposed to considerable amounts of change. A key feature has been the frequent variations in politicians' styles (from confrontational to receptive) and U-turns in policy. Often these have led to low morale among teachers and administrators. In the United Kingdom, a number of major initiatives have had a notable impact on all state schools. These include the delegation of functions to individual schools, a national curriculum, new vocational courses and qualifications, national testing, teacher appraisal (evaluation), publication of average achievement scores for schools in "league tables," a semi-independent role for some schools under "grant-maintained" status, and a new external inspection system administered by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

In the United States, educators have seen moves toward detailed public accountability on the basis of test scores in states such as Tennessee, as well as considerable debate about the consequences of introducing accountability through testing. Concerns have ranged from the negative impact on curriculum and teaching (e.g., Smith and Rottenburg 1991) to the possible manipulation of results at the state level for essentially political ends (e.g., Cannell 1988).

The market ideology underpinning many changes has undoubtedly encouraged a climate in which competition has begun to dominate cooperation. Replacing a planned system with one where local market forces predominate makes it plausible to locate blame with individual schools. Markets operate through competition in which there are winners and losers. Designating schools as "effective" or "failing" is a natural consequence.

For the recipients of a failing label the results can be dramatic, even catastrophic. The direct control of such schools may be taken over by the national education department; their principals and many of the teachers may be fired; powerful troubleshooters or externally appointed "improvement" teams may be appointed to turn them around or indeed close them down as recently happened in the United Kingdom. They may simply drift out of business altogether as parents lose confidence and move their children elsewhere.

Publishing the average test scores of schools in the form of rankings or league tables has encouraged competition rather than collaboration and cooperation among schools and thereby undermines a prerequisite for school improvement: the opportunity and capacity of schools to learn from one another. Along with numerous other reform initiatives—involving teachers learning, "unlearning" and "relearning" new curriculums, new teaching strategies, and new structures within a very short period of time—some of these changes have fostered a climate of fear and retribution. For many principals and teachers, the combined effect of the changes and related pressures has had a negative impact on their morale, resilience, and self-esteem.

The current discussion about failing schools also raises the question of whether this "problem" has always existed on such a scale and we have just chosen to overlook it, or whether the increase in the number of schools that could be described in this way has occurred only recently. No doubt such schools have always existed, and we have neglected to deal with them adequately. Nevertheless, an inevitable result of comparisons among schools, whether by publication of crude league tables or more sophisticated "value added" ones as in Tennessee (Sanders and Horn 1994), is that there will always be winners and losers. Once the losers are deemed to be "failing," it is difficult to find ways to help them when the prevailing atmosphere is one of recrimination and retribution. So the attribution of failure is important, and we need to look more closely at what this attribution might mean.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "FAILING"?

Any attempt to define "failure" poses problems particularly when, as is the case in the United Kingdom, the terms "failing" and "ineffective" are often used interchangeably. For example, are all schools that are not "effective" therefore "ineffective" and/or "failing"? Are there intermediate categories of schools not doing as well as they might but that are not (yet?) in a serious or even dire state? How should we describe schools that are effective in some areas but not others (Sammons, Thomas, and Mortimore 1995)?

Some commentators have tried to address this issue (see, e.g., Stoll 1995 and Barber 1995) by differentiating between "struggling" and "failing" schools. On one level, all schools that can be described as ineffective must be failing their students. On another level, most schools will be "failing" some of their students, some of the time, in some respects. For example, a school that is "effective," for white middle-class boys may not be so for black working-class girls. Issues of race, gender, and social class are particularly pertinent.

In England and Wales, the body that administers the new inspection system (OFSTED), defines failing schools according to how far one or several of the following deficiencies are found:

- Poor standards of pupil (student) achievement;
- Poor quality of education provided;
- Inefficiency in the running of the school; and
- Poor provision for pupils' (students') spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development (DFEE/OFSTED 1995).

Within a market ideology of competition among schools, these attempts to define "failing" locate blame within the school: they pay little attention to the surrounding context that may contribute to what is interpreted as "failure." To avoid making such assumptions, we think the terms "troubled" and "troubling" schools are more neutral. "Troubled" schools, we argue, are those that are perceived to have serious problems. These schools are "troubling" because of their effects on children, staff, and others who are connected with them.

CHARACTERIZING "TROUBLED" SCHOOLS

"Troubled" schools are those that centrally appointed bodies—such as local commissions set up by the U.S. state education departments—view as causing concern. While such schools rightly give proper cause for concern, it is debatable whether simply blaming, labeling, and imposing draconian measures on them helps them improve (indeed, by lowering morale such steps may have just the opposite effect). To encourage positive change, we need to find more constructive ways to work with these schools. One of us recently has worked with three such schools (Myers 1996a). Two key insights have emerged from this work.

First, the current literature and collective wisdom on school effectiveness and school improvement seem to be of limited use to such schools. This is primarily because most of this research was based on schools that were already deemed effective (Reynolds 1995a, 1995b). Although characteristics prevalent in effective schools (e.g., Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore 1995) may be of background interest to those working in troubled schools, for those wanting to rectify their situation, simply being aware of what is missing is of limited practical help. Knowing, for example, that strong leadership is absent does not provide clues on how to make it exist. In addition, it may be more than the absence of these positive characteristics that causes schools to experience problems. Troubled schools may be actively affected by "antithetical" characteristics. For example, it is not just the lack of "strong, purposeful, leadership" that contributes to a school's problems and pushes it into the troubled category but also that the leadership is weak, fragmented, and inconsistent (Myers 1994). Unfortunately, there seems to be little research on the characteristics that prevail in troubled schools.

Second, every troubled school is different. The reasons that schools have gotten to a troubled vary, and the ways they react to being in such a state differ. Consequently, no magic solution exists to their difficulties. They need different types of support.

Elsewhere, one of us (Myers 1996b) has described three distinct categories of troubled schools.

1. *Striving* schools are those that are in trouble but are determined to improve. Although the principal and staff know there are serious problems to address, they do not accept a simple definition of failure. In one principal's words:

> Curiously, the blow dealt us by HMI (official inspectors) served to concentrate minds and energies on the task in hand. There was a great sense of injustice, of there being "another agenda" and consequently a great determination to prove our accusers wrong. This engendered the staff cohesiveness so critical to success (Drake, Mortimer, and Dick 1996, p.103).

In this "striving" school, the fact that the vast majority of the staff, united *with* the principal to demonstrate that the judgment was wrong proved to be very significant for the school's subsequent improvement. The principal exercised strong leadership to make changes, and the staff *allowed* her to do so.

2. *Swaying* schools are ones where, for a while, it may be touch and go whether the school will survive, let alone improve in the face of their difficulties. Within two years, one school experienced considerable staff turnover, including the principal and deputy principal. Two acting principals ran the school before a permanent appointment was eventually made. During this time, the school underwent one trial and one real external inspection. Staff morale wavered. On occasions staff appeared energized and enthusiastic, but at other times they were demoralized and dejected. In the end, "under new management" the school started to improve.

3. *Sliding* schools are those that seem to have become fixed in a seemingly never ending downward spiral. One troubled school that one of us worked with was not able to find its way out of the spiral. In spite of receiving an extensive amount of financial and human support from various quarters, the school actually deteriorated. Like the "swaying" school, this school had also experienced considerable staff turnover, including most of the senior management team. A number of initiatives were mounted to "improve" the school, for example, to counter high student disaffection and improve behavior. These were rarely carried through consistently, however, because staff members were constantly "firefighting" in response to immediate problems. The cumulative effect of these problems was that the staff became increasingly cynical about whether proposed new initiatives would have any impact. Consequently, they became less committed to these initiatives, thus lessening the likelihood of their success.

As each initiative failed to deliver an improvement in student behavior, the staff *and* the students found it increasingly difficult to believe that *anything* could work. In addition, serious relationship problems existed within the senior management team: a lack of agreed upon and shared goals and dysfunctional transactions among them. Dysfunctional relations were also apparent among other staff. A significant number (some of them influential members of the staff group) had worked in the school for a long time and suffered what Rosenholtz (1989) calls the "paralysis of spirit." Some were cynical and resisted any suggested change, often using the assumed teacher union position as a reason why change could not occur. (The teacher union position adopted at the school level was not always supported by officials at the national level.) There was active conflict between one of the major teacher union groups and the management.

Another group of teachers, mainly recent appointments, consisted of young, energetic, enthusiastic, but not very experienced, staff. They found it a challenge to maintain their enthusiasm in the face of their more cynical colleagues and to cope with inconsistent leadership and support. For some of them, the result of negative culture was to leave their school. Many staff held low expectations for students. Among the students, there was a culture of ambivalence and even opposition to learning. This disaffection resulted in some appalling behavior, dissatisfaction and lack of confidence among parents, a poor reputation in the area, low morale among staff and students, and poor student outcomes. In short, this school was sliding on a steepening downward spiral.

These particular schools were all deemed to be "failing" by the official government inspection body in England and Wales (OFSTED), yet they were all very different from one another. They illustrate the complexity of the issue. Together they show that simple labels such as "failing" are highly imprecise descriptors and supply a very poor basis for further action.

In addition to the need for an accurate description of "troubled" schools, the wider context in which such schools exist is important for a comprehensive understanding. For example, most schools currently identified by inspectors as "failing" serve deprived and disadvantaged students. This identification of failure results partly from not contextualizing judgments properly. This is not, of course, to argue for complacency or low expectations in disadvantaged environments. Naming schools as "failing," however, often has the effect of lowering morale and obscuring positive aspects. Public humiliation is not the best way to improve matters. Likewise, labeling schools as "successful" can be equally problematic:

- It can lead to complacency.
- It can lead to inordinate pressure to ensure that each year's examination and test results improve on those of the previous year, without any reference to the talents and abilities of the students in each cohort.
- It also, of course, begs the question of how "successful" is defined.

Agreeing on and achieving performance targets may at least help define and indicate improvement, but, needless to say, setting achievable, realistic, and worthwhile targets is far from simple. All targets must relate to the individual circumstances and contexts of the school.

PLACING SCHOOLS IN CONTEXT

There are two general ways to conceptualize the performances of schools. One, which might be termed the absolute definition, is that which occurs when specific, well-defined targets are not achieved. For example, a school could set itself the target of achieving an average class size of 30 or fewer students over a year. Then, anyone could carry out a relatively straightforward computation to decide whether the school had succeeded or failed, for example, by using simple performance indicators, such as average examination results or attendance rates. A school can be deemed to fall short if it is seen to be below a given threshold. That threshold, of course, will have elements both of arbitrariness and judgment in its choice. So-called "absolute" criteria will necessarily be chosen partly on the basis of existing variations among schools. For example, choosing a definition so that no school fell into the category would be unhelpful. Likewise choosing a threshold that nobody could reach would be rather pointless.

Another example is to set different targets for each school. To be realistic, however, targets must take into consideration the knowledge of what any institution is thought to be capable of achieving. Thus, for a school that already has an average class size of 30.5, a target of 30 may seem realistic, whereas for one with an average size of 37 such a target may not. As soon as we begin to try to understand how targets are set and standards for failure come to be defined, we see that there really can be no absolute universally applicable targets. To set a target that has a *useful* function requires, among other things, an understanding of where a school already is and how easily it can move to another state. In other words, we must *contextualize* our target setting. This need to contextualize has become relatively well understood in the last few years. The most important method for looking at student achievement at the end of a phase of schooling is now recognized to consist of "value-added" analysis, which takes into account the achievements of the same students when they enter school. In addition, such factors as income and social background of students' parents are often considered or used. Value-added systems have begun to be adapted in several places, for example, Tennessee, and have recently received official support from the U.K. government (DFEE 1995).

While policymakers generally recognize the principle of contextualizing educational achievement, it has not been extended widely into debates about school failure. Clearly, in some situations inspection systems require collecting absolute data. For example, acceptable student behavior is necessary to enable teaching and learning to take place. Given that all students are entitled to a high-quality education, allowances cannot be made for disruptive behavior that prevents this, whatever the situation. Nevertheless inspectors, and others who judge schools like the media, also need to recognize that it is much easier to achieve acceptable behavior in some circumstances than in others. This kind of recognition needs to inform all judgments of "blame." Thus, by contextualizing behavior it should be possible to measure progress more effectively and to recognize good practice when it occurs, especially under difficult circumstances. An external inspection and suggested action plan, linked to appropriate resources and support, is likely to evince a more favorable reaction than one that is made in a climate of blame and recrimination.

A second way in which "context" affects how we view school performance is in terms of the *purpose* of any judgment that is made. The perceived purpose of any system of judgment alters how the system operates. It may cause those with a stake in not being labeled as "failing" to distort their behavior so as to avoid negative judgments. These distortions may be detrimental to the students. For example, in England and Wales, where schools' examination results have been published nationally in rankings or league tables, some schools have responded by concentrating their efforts on those students they believe may improve their average examination results, while giving less attention to the rest. Schools in these circumstances have been known to collude with absenteeism and even to find ways of removing low attaining students from their rolls. In any high-stakes system, this kind of "gaming" or "playing the system" will almost inevitably take place.

Another concern is that attempts to judge which schools are "failing" often pay little heed to the practical consequences of such judgments. Consequently, students' morale may suffer, the school may lose community support, and an overall net loss may result. Merely designating a school as "failing" does not automatically lead to remedial action, additional resources, or some overall net gain. The movement to provide educational indicators that apparently demonstrate school "failure" is partly motivated by a belief that there is virtue in the mere fact of publishing comparative information—regardless of its soundness or substance.

RANKING SCHOOLS

Any public ranking of institutions identifies winners and losers. Those at the bottom invariably attract attention as low achievers or "failures." Whether the ranking is made in terms of crude, uncontextualized outcomes or with some reference to the context, as with value-added test scores, any judgments will always contain a great deal of imprecision. There are several reasons for this.

First, the findings are always about a group of students who have completed the program being analyzed, and so a previous state of the school is being judged. The current state may be different. For example, test scores for 16-year-old high school students are based on a cohort who will have started at the school several years previously, and thus any inferences may well not apply to succeeding cohorts.

Second, the statistical procedure whereby "adjustments" are made for background factors and prior attainment will produce only estimates within a margin of error, so a great deal of uncertainty about the exact position of any school will remain. In addition, factors, such as household income, may well influence student achievement. Failure to include these may distort comparisons (Goldstein and Spiegelhalter 1996).

Public league tables are, of course, entirely relative. It is perfectly possible that, in some sense, all the schools could be performing satisfactorily, given the various conditions under which they are operating. Yet, as a result of being ranked, those at the lower end may not be able to escape the "failure" label. This relativism is often obscured by the language we use. In league tables of academic achievement, especially adjusted ones, schools often attract descriptions of "effective" or "ineffective" with no further qualification. One of the undesirable side effects of some "school effectiveness" research arises from the use of such terms in quite unjustified ways.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE FETISH OF INFORMATION

A strong popular belief in many industrialized societies is that the publication of information about the functioning of public bodies is an overwhelming social good. In societies like the United States, this belief may also be enshrined in legislation about public disclosure. In the context of school "failure" or "success," the role of published information about performance is crucial. It provides data to make judgments or, in market terms, introduces a common currency by which the "worth" of institutions can be measured.

As a reaction to unreasonable secrecy, the belief in open access to information seems wholly healthy and undoubtedly has led to many benefits. Yet public disclosure of information cannot be upheld as an absolute principle. Governments recognize this, for example, when they reserve the right to withhold information they deem to threaten national "security." Likewise, if publication of information is likely to harm individuals unfairly or to mislead, then there is a case for refusing to publish it. We contend that some published performance indicators that make statements about schools or other institutions fall into this category. Their capacity to reflect reality accurately may be extremely limited, and their publication may lead to inappropriate inferences about institutions.

In such circumstances, we would argue, information should not be made available publicly—or a warning should be attached about the dangers of interpretation so that nobody would wish to take it seriously. This warning would be more detailed than that which appears n tobacco advertisements. It would involve a proper explanation of why the information is suspect and a reassurance that those who publish the information fully accept its limitations.

This position on published information causes us to be critical about educational performance indicators and their use. Much of the information published under this rubric is produced simply because the data happen to be available (Bottani 1994). Some of it, such as the achievement scores produced by international studies of Math and Sciences (Rotberg 1990), have been used, one may even say usurped, by governments and international agencies such as OECD, in order to rank countries in a supposed order of merit. Even where caveats are entered in official reports, these are of little avail because it is the very fact of publishing them at all that inflicts the damage.

A key factor in this activity is the lack of any possibility of an appeal to a set of publication standards. Just as educational test constructors have ethical guidelines—and most societies have codes governing the publication of pornographic or derogatory items—so we believe there should be a code for the publication of comparative information about institutions. It is time to start a public discussion to see if some consensus can be reached about what a suitable code might contain and whether and how it might be enforced. It is also worth pointing out that without adequate regulation, the poor and misleading quality of some of the information will eventually become apparent, and widespread public distrust will then set in. Because distrust would undermine the whole enterprise, it is in the interests of those who would seek to promote the publication of information to consider carefully the need to provide proper guidelines.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

We want to start this debate by offering some guidelines. We have considered the various users of such kinds of information. For example, policymakers are interested in broad questions of efficiency, whereas parents and students tend to be more concerned with local details relevant to their particular needs. All users, however, should share an interest in accuracy and general quality, and it is these factors that motivate the following suggestions.

1. The principle of unwarranted harms. As with many ethical codes, the fundamental guiding principle is that publication, or communication by other means, should cause no unwarranted harm to those who are identified. We use the term "unwarranted" because under some legitimate circumstances it is in the public interest for genuinely poor performance to be made known. This point leads immediately to the next principle.

2. The principle of the right to information. If acceptably accurate and unbiased information is available about the performance of public institutions, there should be a presumption that this will be made public. This principle may be modified by the operation of principle number 1.

These first two principles require some elaboration to be applied in practice. The remaining principles offer some guidance on the application of these two.

3. The principle of contextualization. All performance indicators should endeavor to provide information that will allow the institutions involved to be judged in a fair manner. Indicators that are known to be affected largely by factors extrinsic to the institutions should not be used. No indicator should be published without a careful description of how it has been contextualized and how further contextualization could be achieved. This information should be presented prominently and in a manner that allows it readily to be understood.

4. The principle of uncertainty estimation. All performance indicators should be accompanied by estimates of statistical uncertainty. These should reflect sampling variability and, where possible, the uncertainty introduced by choice of measurement, statistical technique, and so forth. The presentation of uncertainty intervals or ranges should be as prominent as the presentation of the indicator values themselves.

5. The principle of multiple indicators. Where possible, multiple indicators relevant to each institution should be presented, rather than a single indicator or a summary over several. In this way, no single indicator appears more prominently than another.

6. The principle of institutional response. Any institution for which there is a set of indicators should have the opportunity to make representations about the accuracy of the information presented. The agency compiling the indicators can facilitate this by making available all its data, made suitably anonymous, for verification and reanalysis by the institution or its appointed persons. Further, the data for an institution should be available to that institution for scrutiny.

7. The principle of the responsibilities of agencies publishing information. Any agency involved in publicly providing performance indicators should assume responsibility for disseminating material about its procedures and their justifications. The agency should also publish the technical procedures used for data collection and analysis.

ENFORCEMENT

The process of devising such guidelines would, we hope, create sufficient awareness of a common interest in following them. It may be necessary, however, to establish some form of regulation and a "court of appeal" to ensure that the issues were well understood. One suggestion is that professional associations such as the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA) might take on this regulatory role.

SHIFTING THE BLAME

We have argued that behind the publication of league tables and the labeling of schools as "failures" lies an unspoken assumption about the locality of blame: that it resides in and with the school. Ironically, however, contextualizing performance, by using adjusted league tables of test scores for example, may actually strengthen such an assumption by encouraging the view that *all* other factors have been accounted for, and that any residual variation *must* have its origins in the schools. We have already discussed the inherent imprecision of all performance measures and the provisional nature of any conclusions. We have also argued that blaming schools is one consequence of the "marketization" of education. Nevertheless, if it is accepted that responsibility needs to be located somewhere, there remains the issue of where.

Suppose that in technical terms we could find an acceptable adjustment procedure, eliminate most of the uncertainty attached to the indicator, disregard the historical nature of the information, and rely solidly upon our technical judgments of school differences. Who is to blame then?

If a school or teacher is performing poorly, a first priority is to discover the reason why. In some cases, personal factors such as acute illness may be involved. In other cases, however, we may need to look outside individual schools or groups of schools into the wider society. Education is not a one-way affair. It is not simply the case that an education system delivers graduates into society, having educated them to fill different roles. Nor is it the case that the performance of people in the workplace or society can be causally related directly to their education.

To attribute, say, the poor economic performance of a country to the organization or performance of its education system is to make a logical and empirical blunder. It is just as easy to argue the reverse, namely that the poor economic performance of a nation has a direct effect on its education system: in terms of motivation, provision of resources, or some other feedback mechanism (see Raffe and Willms 1991). Certainly it is not legitimate to argue that league tables of international educational performance reflect the quality of national education systems. The attribution of cause and effect is fraught with difficulty in these circumstances, and the mere repetition of one interpretation does not strengthen its plausibility. The fact that so many policymakers of most political persuasions appear to believe that a large number of the ills of society can be blamed on the education system does not make that proposition correspond more closely to the truth.

Accordingly, the notion of context needs to be extended to include the general political and social context within which schools operate. For example, in a political system where the structure and content of education is subject to rapid, and perhaps poorly coordinated, change—such as happened in England and Wales in the early 1990s, and has occurred in a number of American states, we should expect disruption, low morale, and a consequent effect on "standards." In such circumstances, it is inappropriate to blame the schools. Likewise, in an economy where unemployment is increasing and young people have low employment expectations, any effect on educational performance cannot necessarily be laid at the door of schools.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There are three main problems with attributing blame to schools that are troubled. First, it may not be justified. We have illustrated the complexity of the issues and how difficult it is to disentangle precisely what is going on. Rarely has one person or one event caused the problem. It is more likely to be a series of unlucky and unhappy circumstances. Second, whatever is going on inside the school is often compounded by circumstances beyond the control of the school, for example, the level of support and resourcing, turnover of key personnel, local and national legislation, or the social deprivation of students and their families. Third, and perhaps most important, we have argued that attributing blame does not help the situation get better. In fact, by lowering morale and thereby encouraging staff and students to leave a "sinking ship," it may have the opposite effect.

Having said this, until a significant number of those involved with "troubled" schools (staff, students, parents, governors, school district personnel, politicians) accept the need for change and assume responsibility, there is little chance of improvement. But, remember, these problems do not exist in isolation: they are linked to the wider society and need to be seen within that framework. There is an old African saying "It takes a village to raise a child." The education community should take heed of this expression and find ways of working together to encourage and support those involved with troubled schools, rather than continually criticizing and discouraging them. The first step must be to acknowledge that schools that find themselves in this situation are there for a variety of reasons, there are no packaged remedies, diagnosis and support have to be individually based and given adequate resources, and, finally, change takes time. There are no magic answers and no quick fixes.

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7

Setting Goals in Turbulent Times

MIKE SCHMOKER

In the long run, men hit only what they aim at.

—Henry David Thoreau

Two approaches to improvement to avoid: systems without passion and passion without systems.

—Tom Peters

Goals, rightly defined and pursued, are the most crucial element in any school system that hopes to get better results. They are the soul of a sound improvement effort. As Susan Rosenholtz (1991) tells us, shared goals are central to "the mystery of [a] school's success, mediocrity, or failure" (p. 19). Consequently, we need to attend very carefully to goals and nurture an appreciation for them in a climate that doesn't always value their importance. Based on my experience with various schools and districts, I believe there are a variety of impediments to a healthy and successful goal orientation, born of the culture and character of schools in our time. To a significant extent, these obstacles reflect the failure of schools and districts to be *organizations* in the fullest sense.

THE AVERSION TO GOALS

In my work with the Amphitheater Public Schools in Tucson, Arizona, and as someone who has attended conferences regularly, I have often taken the opportunity to ask educators if their schools or districts set annual or periodic goals. Their answers are revealing. Some say no; others say yes, but then can't remember what they are. Just as troubling is that among those who do, what they call goals are almost never precisely defined, measurable, or directly tied to student learning.

More often than not, these goals are broad and imprecise, or they express only an intention to implement a new program or innovation, for example, to "promote the use of technology in the classroom"; to "align areas of the curriculum for academic excellence"; or to "empower students and staff to maintain a positive school climate." This is a fairly widespread pattern (Glickman 1993, pp. 48–49; McGonagill 1992, pp. 16–17). In the great majority of schools, explicit, measurable *learning* goals are still rare. As Rosenholtz (1991) tells us, "The lack of agreed-upon goals for teaching makes schools organizational exceptions" (p. 9). Even fewer schools have developed a means for regularly assessing student progress toward learning goals. Without this measurable aspect, goals exert very little influence on classroom practice. McGonagill (1992) observes that as a result, "goal statements rarely become an operational force within the district." And so they subsequently fail to "generate the results that inspired the restructuring" of schools in the first place (p. 17).

This aversion is similarly evident—and often encouraged—beyond the school. I recently attended a presentation by a number of graduate students who were involved in an ambitious and worthy school improvement project, the stated purpose of which was to raise student achievement through dialogue among members of local school communities. But when I inquired about the goals or objectives they sought to achieve, or how they would determine student success or failure in terms of achievement, the reactions ran from incomprehension to antagonism. They reacted quite strongly to the notion of specific goals. According to one participant, explicit learning goals were, thankfully, something we had finally put behind us. This response struck me as being fairly characteristic of too many conversations I have had with educators when the subject rolled around to what—specifically—we are trying to accomplish in terms of student learning. Dan Lortie (1975) called this important element "tangibility" and lamented its absence in schools (p. 28).

The reaction against organized, collective goal orientation has in recent times been propelled by Donald Schön's 1983 work or its interpretation. Schön focuses on the differences in what professionals encounter—hence the need for different priorities and approaches that reflect the different contexts in which people work and the different problems they face. Measurable goals, on the other hand, urge a reliance on what professionals have in common—on the similarities that teachers encounter. Schön's perspective might argue for maximum, even radical, flexibility, which common, measurable goals would constrain. Although common, collective goals imply that we succeed by working together, Schön's skepticism regarding science and "technical rationality" has in some corners promoted skepticism about collective or generalizable approaches to problems.

Trenchant as Schön's analysis is, its implications for action deserve a more nuanced treatment. Too much can be made of differences in context. Recognizing individual and contextual differences is enormously important, but not to the extent that it prevents us from seeing the value of learning together, applying common strategies, comparing and analyzing progress together toward a *shared, measurable goal*. We must reconcile the tension between the idiosyncracies of context and the shared experiences of educators.

Why? Because common, measurable goals are the most effective antidote to the individualism that prevails in schools (Lortie 1975). The way that schools tolerate, even embrace, individualism among teachers reveals our failure to be an organization that recognizes the need for common, coordinated effort. Such a statement may puzzle those who observe the school district's ostensibly hierarchical structure, its organizational charts, and its corporate-like trappings. But the real question is, how do these structures actually promote learning? If schools exist for learning, then we must admit that we are not optimally organized for it. In too many schools, the connection between assumed aims and what practitioners actually produce is characteristically remote (Sizer 1992, p. 19; Lortie 1975, p. 211). There is a lack of orchestrated, cooperative effectiveness, the raison d'être of an organization.

Thomas Donahoe (1993) once told an audience of teachers that "schools had no organization," but were only "convenient locations for a bunch of individual teachers, like independent contractors. . . . [T]eachers, like their students, carry on side by side similar but essentially separated activities." He found it interesting that his audience of teachers "agreed rather enthusiastically" with this observation (p. 299). Indeed, Judith Warren Little (1990) cites the surprising differences found even among teachers who were supposedly teaching English (p. 527). Over the years, as a member of several English departments, I have observed at close hand such radical differences, including one English department that taught language arts—reading, writing, and speaking skills—only about 20 percent of the time. And what of David Berliner's (1984) observation that in the same school one teacher taught 28 times as much science as a teacher down the hall—indicative of the power of luck or preference in what or how much your child will learn (p. 53). As Tom Peters (1987) writes, "What gets measured gets done" (p. 480). These disturbing disparities could not exist where common, measurable goals obtain and are consistently addressed. But the aversion to such goals and measurement has a strong historical and cultural tradition.

THE CASE FOR GOALS—AND MEASUREMENT

As long ago as 1970, John Goodlad called for "clear-cut, specified goals for schooling at every level" (Goodlad and Klein et al., p. 13). As McGonagill (1992) found, and as my experience in Amphitheater has confirmed, goals help practitioners to "focus their energies so that they may choose among the many potentially interesting things to do and direct the limited resources of the system" (p. 19). Gene Maeroff (1993) found that "a clear, elevating goal and a results-driven structure" were among the essential conditions for successful collective effort (pp. 514–515). In one of the most widely read studies on effective teamwork, Jon Katzenbach and David Smith (1993) found that teamwork itself is feckless in the absence of "demanding, precise, realistic" common goals (p. 21).

Just as important for Katzenbach and Smith, as well as many others, is that these goals be measurable—that we monitor our progress toward them using data (Rosenholtz 1991, p. 16; Wiggins 1994, p. 18; Glickman 1993, p. 51). As Wiggins (1994) points out, goals, combined with measurement, can inform us as to how we can adjust performance in light of actual results (p. 18).

Nonetheless, the aversion to measurement is often a part of the aversion to goals. Many educators believe that learning is too ineffable to be captured in numerical terms. As McQuade and Champagne (1995) aver, many educators

> are convinced that "measurable" means trivial. When we urge teachers to cling to their highest aspirations and aim for their lofti-

> est goals, we are sometimes scolded, "But you can't measure love for learning," or "You can't measure real understanding" (p. 23).

Just as some educators abhor the notion of precisely defined goals, others eschew measurement or "quantitative" evaluation altogether. This aversion to measurement allows many schools to convince themselves that they are doing well or getting better—even when they aren't. Measurement is one of the best ways for a school to see where it is in fact strong or in need of improvement. Visible, tangible indicators can reveal not only who is and isn't getting a good education; they can also reveal areas of program strength and weakness, which in turn create opportunities for improvement.

We can no longer afford to overlook the potential for professional development that is created when practitioners, from the best to the least experienced, can help one another in an information-driven context. Information acts as both a guide and a goad, especially if it is shared in a protective but public context where groups, rather than individuals, are provided with data that point to where additional effort is needed most (Rosenholtz 1991, p. 6; Peters and Waterman 1982, p. 240; Schmoker 1996, pp. 33–35). For districts willing to make the commitment, an emphasis on measurable goals can pay off handsomely in improved writing, speaking, discussion, math, and science skills—as well as standardized test scores (Schmoker 1996, Bullard and Taylor 1993).

Goals, Measurement, and Their Historical Antecedents

Despite the benefits to be gained by clear goal setting, and the work that has already been achieved in this area by a number of schools and districts, some recent movements have given goals and measurement a bad name. Though well intended, these too have fed the reigning skepticism about the value of measurable goals in creating positive change and school success.

Consider first the instructional goals and objectives movement, which sought to promote instructional focus and management. It was an attempt to lend an additional degree of clarity and precision to instruction and to our ability to assess progress and performance (Mager 1962, 1972). In *Goal Analysis*, Mager (1972) helped us to see that while words like *know*, *appreciate*, and *understand* were important, they were very difficult to assess. His operative question, and a helpful one at that, was, "Do you know it when you see it?" In *Preparing Instructional*

Objectives, Mager (1962) encouraged teachers and curriculum specialists to avoid imprecise language and to favor instead language like *write*, *recite*, and *identify*—as well as *solve* and *construct*.

But again, if we look at the system in which this was encouraged—a system in which staff development and meaningful supervision were (and still are) minimal and "coverage" is too often the operative or de facto goal of instruction, then we can understand how Mager's scheme went awry. Its perceived effect was to promote a mechanistic, hypertechnical subdividing of student skills. The conventional and probably accurate wisdom is that this approach to objectives had a trivializing effect, even though many of the concepts it advanced were precursors of the best of what we now do in the name of rubrics and performance criteria.

A close relative of the behavioral objectives school was the Essential Elements of Instruction movement begun by Madeline Hunter (1982). Despite its potential value, this initiative had a similar effect, which we now understandably abhor. The movement emphasized a manageable, easily evaluated plan of instruction—and classroom evaluation—that eventually began to favor an approach to learning that was all parts, no whole. Again, in a system that was never very good at prioritizing, this strategy promoted an instructional course of least resistance. The program inadvertently favored pedestrian skills and activities such as listing, matching, identifying, and completing a certain percentage of exercises with the "right" answers—with little regard for the educational value of these exercises.

This philosophy, combined with the still-lingering misunderstanding that sophisticated skills shouldn't even be attempted until students have demonstrated mastery of the basics, can still be heard in utterances like "I can't teach writing, even paragraph writing, to my 5th graders until they can learn to complete the exercises in *Warriner's Grammar*, or can write grammatical sentences." Though unintended, the combined effect of these trends was to promote a boring, meaningless, and ultimately ineffective pedagogy, at the expense of teaching writing or conducting a stimulating class discussion. Work like that of Means, Chelemer, and Knapp (1991) demonstrates how much is lost when we reduce all learning to rudimentary skills.

The attempts of the above initiatives were noble, perhaps even necessary: to translate the routinely ignored school curriculum into a more meaningful set of learning goals that could be assessed. But in a system where measurement and assessment were in their infancy, where coverage predominated and virtually all learning experiences were valued equally and indiscriminately, these new structures tended to favor what could be most easily assessed: memorization and discrete skills. Both Hunter and Mager set out to rescue curriculum and instruction from imprecision, to introduce order and manageability into instructional delivery. But the net effect was to feed the reaction to quantitative methods that often dismisses precision, definition, and collective clarity in any of its forms.

Goals and measurement have indeed been used for specious purposes. And they continue to be: the media's use of SAT scores is an appalling abuse of numbers. To report these, as well as AP scores, without explaining that, though nominally lower, they reflect historic gains in the number and diversity of students successfully completing them is unconscionable. Similarly, the reigning overemphasis on—rather than nuanced appreciation for—standardized tests has also fed the reaction against "measurable" improvement. I believe standardized tests, along with other assessments, provide very valuable information. Because of an over-reliance on standardized tests, many consider it enlightened to prefer almost anything to measurable assessment (Theobald and Mills 1995).

For these reasons, these are indeed turbulent times for setting clear, measurable goals for the purpose of improving schools. Nonetheless, the focus on measurable goals is arguably in the ascendancy—and should be. The examples of abuse notwithstanding, there are increasingly more examples of how measurable goals have helped schools, districts, and teams of teachers to get better and better results. Examples like Maryland's dramatically improved writing scores as well as innumerable examples of increased achievement, from standardized tests to alternative assessment, should bring us back to the real impact that setting common, measurable targets for improvement can have. We must recognize that, like fire, the value of goals and measurement depends on the uses to which they are put.

Numbers are powerful representations, which as Bruer (1994) tells us, are among the symbolic links that enable us to remember, store, and manipulate our thoughts and experience: "The representations we construct in encoding our experiences have profound effects on our behavior and our learning" (p. 23). Numbers, and by extension, wall charts illustrating quantitative growth can energize a group and truly have profound effects on goal orientation, as I saw in many cases in the Amphitheater district. As Csikszentmihalyi's studies (1990) have demonstrated, numbers are among the best kinds of feedback, the essential information that tells us how we are doing relative to well-defined goals, which he found to be the key to a sense of both personal and professional well-being.

One of the very best ways to combat the blithe dismissals of measurable goals is to cite meaningful successes and to arrange for teachers to experience such success themselves. This is where we have perhaps our greatest—and most overlooked—opportunity for improving schools. In staff development and in professional preparation courses alike, we have yet to disseminate and discuss in any systematic way the kinds of success stories that truly exemplify the importance of goals and measurement. If we did this with real heart and energy, we would begin to see resistance fade and give way to a new enthusiasm for goal-oriented action. And we would greatly enhance the possibilities for teaching far greater numbers of students more effectively.

ON-THE-GROUND REALITIES

Once we understand the importance of working as a true organization and are ready to set meaningful, measurable goals, a host of other problems emerge, however. They are chiefly in the areas of school improvement planning and assessment. Success in these areas depends in turn on the degree of clarity, follow-up, and commitment that accompanies our effort.

Moving from vague, general goals to measurable student learning goals is a transition of the greatest magnitude—a sea change from conventional school improvement planning. It is delicate work that requires clear, systematic effort and, in the early going, strong district-level interest and commitment.

STRUGGLES WITH SITE-BASED MANAGEMENT

When our district became site based, our school councils were enthusiastic about participating in annual school planning sessions. These often lasted as many as three days and usually occurred in the spring or early summer. But this enthusiasm and the plethora of goals generated at these sessions turned out to be problematic. Because we had no clear process or criteria for selecting these goals or for measuring success toward them and no limit on how many to establish, innumerable "goals" emerged somewhat haphazardly from these discussions. In addition, the bulk of the planning time was often spent discussing a wide range of personal and philosophical issues, generating too many goals, assigning committee members to work on each goal, and scheduling activities that often had only a remote connection to improved student performance. We hadn't learned to exercise a sensible economy either with regard to the planning time or to the limits of what we could meaningfully manage during the school year.

What became apparent was that our new school site councils were not optimally geared for goal-oriented improvement. First, the goals that came out of these planning sessions were seldom student learning goals. They tended to focus on issues of staff cooperation, better communication, curriculum revision, or technology, which did not necessarily promote improved student learning. This is precisely what McGonagill (1992) found to be generally true in most schools. Second, because of the abundance of goals and the unlimited amount of discussion, little time was left to establish ways to assess progress or to determine success or failure. Third, no formal steps were taken to determine the student's most obvious or urgent learning needs. A telling illustration: at the very end of three days of school improvement discussions, a parent held up a newspaper that contained local school test scores. It was patently clear to those in the room that the school had a serious deficiency in one area of performance. But our time was up; the die was cast. No data of any kind had been discussed as a preliminary part of school planning to help us establish priorities. And though the discussions had generated a large number of interesting goals, none of them were measurable or had any clear link to improved student learning.

All of these difficulties were interrelated. We began to realize a need to develop a more explicit procedure to help us address them. We decided to develop a written step-by-step process—eventually with extensive annotations for each step—that would help the schools to organize for improvement and better results. A number of people contributed to the development and refinement of this document.

One feature of this process, which we learned from another school system, was a district-level review of school improvement plans. (We have been fond of borrowing good practices from other school districts. We adapted some of this process from the Clovis, California, schools, which have been using this system for years.)

It became apparent that we were still learning about what constituted a measurable goal and that the dynamics of school councils didn't always favor either measurement or academic priorities. Too many of the goals took a very different form than what we knew would promote better student learning results. A decided preponderance of nonacademic goals emerged from school planning sessions. In addition, we found that though the annual reports submitted to the superintendent were characteristically thick, detailed, and brimming with descriptions of committee activities, they were short on clear, measurable evidence that indicated whether progress had been made or where additional effort or adjustment was needed to promote further progress. The goals were promoting a great deal of activity, but they did not necessarily promote progress at the student level. The district-level review, though a sensitive step in the new site-based culture, helped us to ensure that a year of effort was not lost on a less-than-suitable goal that might not truly promote student development.

The first step in the new eight-step process was to marshal all of the available data and evidence we had to help us determine more objectively what was most in need of attention. Each school examined climate surveys, expository or narrative writing data, standardized test scores, discipline data, data on the research paper we required from all students, disaggregated achievement and performance data. Importantly, they were examined not by the entire site-based council, but by a designated ad hoc committee, the "Take Stock" team, which then shared its findings and recommendations with the larger council for its review. The next step was to select from a limited set of recommended alternatives, which were based on a careful review of school data.

How Many Goals?

Even more important was that each school was limited to selecting *only two goals*, one of which had to be a student learning goal. Research had told us that organizations in general were universally apt to select too many goals (Chang, Labovitz, and Rosansky 1992, p. 112) and that this tendency was inimical to focused improvement (Fullan with Stiegelbauer 1991, p. 71; Hopkins and West 1994, p. 185; Joyce, Wolf, and Calhoun 1993, p. 44). Though seemingly a small matter, this was a genuine coup. In follow-up interviews, administrators were unanimous in reporting how much more smoothly the process went and how it appropriately steered the school toward a sensible number of manageable goals that had clear and legitimate priority. The new process went over well with the school councils, too.

The next challenge was to maintain energy and focus. We found that it was truly difficult for faculties or teams to meet at regular times to discuss progress and to analyze data for continuous improvement purposes. Without regular meeting times, goal orientation predictably dissipates. To attain measurable progress, we had to institute regular meetings to discuss where we were and how we could get better. It was interesting to observe, however, how easily such meetings were postponed or crowded out by the crush of ongoing events and crises. Even though most of our schools had scheduled weekly or monthly times when students were sent home early, these times were not consistently devoted to discussing school goals or ways to promote progress toward them. To promote constancy of purpose, and to allow for regular analysis and intervention, we decided that schools needed to establish meeting times firmly—at the beginning of the year—to discuss progress and methods with respect to this now-limited number of goals.

MANAGEABLE MEASURES

Here we encountered a deeper issue that is one of the more pronounced features of school systems and one that creates a great deal of difficulty. This issue concerns our current state of standards and assessment, and the kind of data we collect and analyze. At regular meetings, data are essential. Without data, even regular meetings can fail to generate the kind of goal orientation that energizes people toward continuously better performance. With data, we have the regular, frequent feedback that Csikszentmihalyi (1990) found to be a sine qua non for sustaining interest and energy. In the case of student learning goals, that means gathering annual data and assessments, as well as periodic or formative assessments that can be gathered and analyzed frequently and efficiently.

The failure to realize the key role appropriate data play is where so many efforts bog down. In the name of coverage or thoroughness, staff often create assessments that are so exhaustive that they could not possibly be administered and analyzed regularly. I have seen projects virtually abandoned when teachers realize that their assessment and analysis consume too much time. I also have seen staffs often select goals or measures that are remote from student learning. It is paramount that assessment items sensibly represent, rather than exhaustively cover, all that has been taught. Creating such assessments is a genuine challenge. But because this is arguably the most important issue with the greatest potential for problems, I recommend that a special committee be formed—even be paid or given released time if necessary—to develop assessments that everyone (after collective review) can embrace but which do not require disproportionate amounts of time to administer.

The name of the game is that assessment data be both meaningful and *efficient*. No assessment can or should attempt to measure everything, but only the information that can give a meaningful glimpse into the essential aspects of student performance in any subject area. Our most successful efforts were those that made use of a carefully developed, commonly used rubric for writing, math, or the research paper that could be used regularly and quickly as a natural part of the instructional program. Among the good examples were a handful of representative math problems, brief oral presentations, an expository essay, and a science project representing skills learned during a unit. Each of these could be administered quarterly as a natural part of the instructional program. When administered, the teachers simply count, in one column of their grade books for instance, the number of students meeting or exceeding the standard. Then, either by team (e.g., grade level/department) and/or by school, they can submit the data anonymously to the team or project leader as a number or percentage.

A useful next step is simply for teachers to scan the assessment for a pattern of what seems to be the dominant challenge(s) facing their students, for example, the ability to explain mathematical processes in writing; the failure to write effective introductions for expository papers, or descriptive settings in narratives; the ability to set up research paper projects that critically treat (rather than merely regurgitate back) factual information. When faculty teams arrive at the meeting, a team leader provides an updated chart showing how students are doing or how many are achieving the exit-level standard. The ensuing discussion then centers on "how we're doing" and then—the importance of this can't be overemphasized—on concrete, effective strategies for promoting better results by the next meeting. The collective focus and the progress chart promote engagement and motivation; the discussion of the chief performance challenges conveys the rich potential for achieving continuously better results. One cannot underestimate the power of these simple steps when adhered to regularly and conscientiously. A common-sense application of these practices all but ensures a high level of staff motivation, professional development, and, in the end, student progress.

MEANINGFUL—VS. PERFECT—MEASURES

Is this process inexact? Of course. And this in itself presents a special problem. Especially in the early stages, who can say that the data reflect a clear uniformity of evaluation standards among faculty? I have seen teachers become deeply concerned, even paralyzed at this stage. Inter-rater reliability sessions inevitably reveal some divergence in how people grade, how they interpret the rubric. Especially at first, collective data will reflect this tendency. But only consider why we are gathering the data: it is to provide a common language and reference point for identifying strengths and weaknesses—which it does admirably. In addition, at the inter-rater sessions I have attended, the ratings tend to be impressively close because they are being conducted relative to a common rubric—something new in education. A one-point difference on a first-try evaluation of a sample paper is in fact quite good, as even the Educational Testing Service affirms. An inordinate fastidiousness at this point can prevent us from seeing just how much more precise we are the moment we begin to work—from a common rubric or set of criteria—*to discuss student performance together* and occasionally to conduct sessions to strengthen inter-rater uniformity. These processes, warts and all, must be kept in perspective. Together, they represent the most effective way to promote both increasing consistency of performance standards as well as ongoing improvement. We must appreciate how such effort helps us to help both students and teachers to perform immensely better.

"INTERDISCIPLINARY" OBSTACLES

Two more technical problems spring from another recent trend: the move toward integrated, interdisciplinary instruction. On the one hand, this is a worthy long-term goal that we should work toward carefully. On the other hand, it has the potential for derailing improvement efforts because it complicates the organization of assessment and can keep same-discipline teachers from communicating regularly and effectively. From my experience, interdisciplinary team meetings took the place of, and eliminated, subject-area department meetings. Just at the point when we are learning the importance of a shared vocabulary in discussions about improvement, teachers are often being cut off from their same-discipline peers from whom they may stand to learn the most about sharing methods and strategies for improving student skills and proficiencies.

This was vividly illustrated to me by an exceptionally talented group of teachers who became an interdisciplinary team in a school where subject-area meetings were abandoned. They spent considerable time planning what they hoped would be an explicitly target-centered improvement effort. And they did manage to develop some interdisciplinary activities. But the effort bogged down appreciably. They weren't able to organize assessments to give them a satisfactory picture of periodic progress, and, because they represented different subject areas, their team meetings tended to be dominated by the one thing they had in common: student discipline problems. The enthusiasm for interdisciplinary teams, though it far outstrips *successfully integrated* instruction, prevents many teachers from wanting to settle for "mere" subject-area assessment in the traditional areas like English, math, science, or social studies.

Lamentably, the subject-area organization of schools has often promoted isolation among members of the same school faculty. Departments can be highly territorial and competitive (Hargreaves, Earl, and Ryan 1996, p. 86). Nonetheless, we still need to move along this path of integration or interdisciplinarity patiently. For one thing, many teachers are apt to react strongly to arrangements that deprive them of their identity, especially when so much of what goes on in the name of integrated instruction is often token and "ill conceived" (Hargreaves et al. 1996, p. 99). While making the transition to more flexible and organic arrangements, we have to take care not to abandon the best of what the traditional disciplines can offer us. As Howard Gardner and Veronica Boix-Mansilla (1994) tell us, the disciplines represent a rich and very carefully developed attempt to provide us with "the keenest lenses on the world. . . . The disciplines are the most useful means for illuminating those generative issues that have perennially engaged the curiosity of thoughtful human beings" (pp. 17 and 18). Unfortunately, the move toward interdisciplinary structures often disorients teachers and isolates them from their same-discipline colleagues, thereby frustrating the possibilities for rich communication and a natural goal orientation. Perhaps interdisciplinary arrangements should be piloted on a smaller scale until we gradually learn to organize and assess student skills more effectively.

Another hazard of cross-disciplinary effort can be seen at the secondary level. One year at one of our schools, an elaborate whole-school effort was built around a goal for which staff from only one subject area felt any passionate commitment. But because the school was anxious to select a goal—one goal—that involved all teachers, the staff selected one to which there was the least amount of objection. The result was a half-hearted effort, energy for which dissipated well before the end of the school year. Sagor (1995) calls this the "one-solution syndrome," where faculty energy is "channeled into an area of albeit common, but not pressing concern" (p. 24). As Tom Peters (1992) says, the only thing worse than an absence of a systematic approach to improvement is an absence of passion (in Townsend and Gebhart 1992, p. 80).

The solution might be fairly simple: to establish, on the basis of your best data and evidence, one goal for each department, or for a grade level within departments. The goals should reflect a clear priority for which team- or department-level teachers have an obvious passion. Collective goal orientation does not always have to mean every teacher in the school working toward the very same goal, though this can be very effective. But it can mean each department or group working to reach its respective goal. Overall, we need to avoid rushing into all-school or multidisciplinary efforts or arrangements blindly or in ways that cut us off from the best aspects of working *within* as well as among the disciplines.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

The scheme for continuous improvement is essentially a simple one: select a meaningful goal; gather meaningful assessment data regularly relative to the goal; then use the data to monitor progress and to identify the areas of performance that represent your best chance for promoting additional improvement. Nonetheless, we must make a very deliberate effort to keep it simple, to keep the effort from being derailed by the potential complications in the areas of assessment and analysis. Energy, imagination, and careful planning are essential. Assessment is complicated by an additional fact: standards and assessment are in a state of flux. It is no easy task to select clear targets when we are being pulled in seemingly different directions—for example, disciplinary vs. interdisciplinary ones—and when we are also subject to the vicissitudes of what appear to be different state, district, and school preferences and expectations.

It is supremely important to remember that we cannot do everything at once, but that there are in reality many opportunities for us to address, *meaningfully if not perfectly*, the dictates of almost any set of standards. For example, students clearly need to be able to write well, to be good at mathematical computation, to complete higher-order mathematical problems, to both master and intellectually process historical knowledge in social studies, to read sensitively and perceptibly, and to complete science projects and assignments that reveal their grasp of both content knowledge and enable students to acquire a scientific disposition. All of these *can be measured* with home-grown tests, with adapted rubrics and assessments. These can in turn be constructed with an eye to being as consistent as possible with state or other standards.

The point is that the requirement for such skills and knowledge to be mastered should not, in the main, change dramatically. If we wait for perfect and final consistency in aligning these skills among national, state, and district expectations, we might be waiting forever (and who wants such unbending consistency anyway?). If we look carefully and hard at the common patterns among these sets of expectations and standards, we can move forward confidently in the spirit of these expectations.

REINVENTING COLLEGIALITY

Another challenge of our time that pervades all these issues and problems is that we are asking school personnel, in many cases for the first time, to be thinking contributors who can generate solutions to emergent problems and obstacles. This is something new. Teachers have seldom been brought together—regularly—to be asked for their suggestions, to develop real solutions to the most pressing concerns students face. This is part of becoming an organization. When teachers do meet, the purpose is not always clear. Therefore, they are accustomed to using these opportunities for exploring or elaborating, sometimes at length, on problems or recurring issues. The atmosphere can then become more therapeutic than proactive and concrete. And, as many teachers have shared with me, this can kill enthusiasm and a sense of purpose. I have attended innumerable improvement meetings where the conversation centered almost solely on individual students and their problems, without any mention of instruction or its improvement.

This occurrence confirms Little's (1990) finding that most of what goes on in the name of collegiality is in fact counterproductive, that it often thwarts improvement (p. 511). Precious improvement time can dissolve into what one teacher in exasperation called "bitch sessions" that dwell on conditions over which we have no control. These "discussions" are not carefully planned to focus on concrete, constructive goal-oriented action. At the beginning of any continuous improvement meeting, the facilitator must make clear the importance of this focus. Until now, we have done very little to help staff to come together, as members of an organization, to discuss instruction and its improvement with serious regularity.

In sum, even if we attend to all of the above conditions regarding assessment and planning, goal orientation will founder unless we reinvent faculty and team interaction. Because of the time constraints that dog school organizations, efficiency and concreteness are paramount. We must establish guidelines for discussion; for instance, about which goals we select and pursue, about their value and legitimacy. Such philosophical discussions should afford participants the luxury of some degree of elaboration while ensuring that all participants have roughly equal opportunities to express themselves within the allotted time. (The reigning dynamics of most meetings mitigate against this.) But once goals are discussed and established, a tighter, more efficient format is called for. It requires a discipline that maximizes the group's ability to marshal each staff member's concrete, succinctly expressed intellectual contribution to how practice should be adjusted and refined toward the attainment of goals. There are a number of excellent source books for such methods. Cindy Lakin Morley's *How to Get the Most Out of Meetings* (1994) contains some excellent guidelines for bringing out teachers' best ideas and practical suggestions for improvement.

To that end, and in order to harvest constructive strategies and ideas, we have even invoked what Allied Signal, an aerospace products company, calls the "20-second rule" that limits participants' remarks to 20 seconds. Rather than restrict the flow of ideas, this has resulted in greater clarity and concision of expression, while sustaining the focus and energy level at such meetings. Once we briefly discuss the data and identify key challenges, we can then, through fast, efficient brainstorming, generate a substantial list of effective strategies to address these challenges. Our goal has been to complete effective meetings in 30 to 40 minutes (Schmoker 1996, pp. 109–110). In that amount of time, we have been able to generate a good number of insightful, effective suggestions that can be implemented immediately. If team members have done their work and the team leader has done her or his job of charting the data, the time can be spent very productively. The practical learning that occurs in these settings easily rivals what takes place in the name of most "staff development," which is often less explicitly goal-oriented and less responsive to the emerging and unanticipated problems teachers encounter in their own classrooms and school. A simple calculation should reveal that if everyone does his or her bit, an effective goal-oriented effort requires just a few hours of the annual school schedule. And it can be, as we have seen, enormously powerful in terms of professional payoff and student performance.

It is important to realize as well that a well-planned goal-oriented effort almost always pays off in the near term. When people work collectively toward shared, measurable goals, and when they regularly share practical expertise in a mutually accountable setting, short-term improvement is almost inevitable. And the effect of seeing these measurable, visible improvements, however slight, is perhaps the most underestimated step we could take to promote higher levels of both staff expertise and student learning.

LEADERSHIP: CONFRONTATION AND CELEBRATION

Finally, the ingredient that can potentially make or break goal-oriented effort is leadership. This includes teacher leadership. In our experience, there has been a virtual one-to-one correspondence between leadership and measurable success. That is, unless the administrator expresses pride and interest in the success of the project, unless the teacher leader is carefully selected and given support and encouragement, the effort will probably die. It is the nature of systems that those in them can easily perceive if their efforts are not of the highest importance, if they are marginal to the organization and its real priorities. Nothing is more damaging to success. Through sincere interest, the building administrator must establish priority and urgency. This *can* be done: through administrative presence at improvement meetings or even through one-minute visits, followed by an expressed interest in teachers' progress and outcomes, a keen interest in monitoring, sharing, and formally celebrating measurable success in reaching goals.

In our time, we must face the fact that goal-oriented improvement is still not the manifest priority of most schools. The establishment of improved student learning results as the school's number one priority will take careful effort; it must take place on a symbolic as well as concrete and personal level. It does not need to take inordinate amounts of time or resources. But it must be a regular, routine part of the life of schools. Administrative presence at improvement meetings, public celebrations, the sincere and frequent expression of appreciation and encouragement are very much the stuff of goal orientation.

And some of the time, there must be what Robert Evans (1993) reminds us is especially needed at this time of higher school expectations: "confrontation vs. avoidance." This is not to violate the supreme importance of diminishing fear in the workplace, of which much has already and very necessarily been made in both industry and education. Nonetheless, Evans points out that effective leadership requires a "bias toward confrontation," though it "violates a tradition in schools of avoiding conflict" (p. 23). For him, one of the most effective solutions is very consistent with the continuous improvement model advocated here:

> For staff members who think—incorrectly—that they are achieving the new goals . . . there is a need for disconfirming feedback presented in a climate of psychological safety (p. 23).

Either way, the school or district administrator has a special role as the person in the most high-leverage position to formalize priorities, use symbols, confer legitimacy, and to marshal resources in the service of goal-centeredness. If we have learned anything, it is that the likelihood of success depends more on this than on any other factor. There is no way around it. If we want continuous improvement in schools, leaders must create, with the help of their staff, a setting where team leaders and team members feel empowered and encouraged to strive and stretch for better results which they know reflect the institution's highest priorities, its core values. In Amphitheater, successful teams have been honored by giving them opportunities to present their improvement projects at administrative retreats, and with small stipends. And, to honor the efforts of its school teams toward measurable improvement, Frederick County (Maryland) Public Schools holds year-end dinners.

As Deborah Meier (1995) writes, "The secret ingredient is wanting it badly enough" (p. 185). Even after we have all of the elements in place, commitment is everything. Success is a function of both leadership and effective "followership" (Wills 1994, p. 4). In a democracy, and in an organization where the efficacy of collective effort is acknowledged and embraced, we must all be both leaders and followers in the pursuit of what is most dear to us. The obstacles and impediments to being an effective organization are everywhere. But, no matter what we find in our path, it is this combination of both uncompromising commitment and deliberate, carefully planned goal orientation that can—and will—enable us, in Thoreau's words, to "meet with a success unexpected in common hours."

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8

Rethinking Assessment and Accountability

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In the 1990s *fixing education* has become a topic of conversation in staffrooms, boardrooms, legislatures, parliaments, living rooms, and coffee shops. Not surprisingly, more accountability and more assessment are often high on the list of quick-fixes. While accountability and assessment are often seen as going together, even as synonymous, in practice they are not always the most comfortable of bedfellows. Accountability is usually seen as involving some kind of testing or assessment. And one of the major purposes of student assessment is indeed accountability. But student assessment is meant to achieve other ends as well, including giving feedback on and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment strategies that are driven by accountability aims often do little to improve teaching and learning. In this chapter, we argue for an approach to assessment that we believe embodies the possibility of *both* improving learning *and* providing assurances of accountability.

Because we have both worked as researchers in close contact with school districts (one of us in Ontario, Canada, the other in several different American districts and states), we have had ringside seats as assessment has come to the front of educational reform. One early observation was that assessment programs are being intensified, existing practices are being scrutinized, and assessment has become a very political and visible part of educational reform in many countries, not just in Canada and the United States.

Around the world, assessment is becoming an extremely "high stakes" activity for students, teachers, and schools. At the same time, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the available assessment procedures. Assessment reform, like other educational changes, is caught in a maelstrom of rapid change and uncertainty. The political reality of powerful constituents clamoring for immediate assessment data has districts, states, provinces, and nations furiously experimenting with myriad approaches to assessment, without enough time for thoughtfulness, reflection, or careful research. The knowledge base on assessment is being developed at the same time as the assessment procedures are being implemented in what amount to high stakes field tests (Earl 1996). These developments have pressed and stimulated many assessment specialists to move outside traditional assessment approaches and to imagine something different. The search is on for the *right* assessment system.

So what does *assessment* look like when it is done well? In our experience, the quest for one *right* approach is folly. Instead, we suggest a more differentiated view of assessment purposes and approaches. In this chapter, we explore one of these purposes and make the case that *assessment as learning* can and should be an exciting, and highly valued, component of educational change. Finally, we argue that *assessment as learning* can be reconciled with assessment for accountability only if we fundamentally rethink accountability.

Because it is easier to grasp this possibility of *assessment as learning* through real examples of assessment practice than through abstract advocacy of assessment principles, we begin with a glimpse of the classroom of a teacher involved in a continuing research study in educational change, in which one of us (Lorna Earl) is involved. We look closely at what positive assessment practice is like and, in doing so, identify some key principles of what makes it positive, in terms of enhancing student and teacher learning.

POSITIVE ASSESSMENT IN PRACTICE

Rich Cornwall[1] has been a participant in a study of 32 teachers of grade 7 or 8 drawn from four large school districts in Ontario. The districts are involved in serious and sustained efforts to incorporate a new provincial curriculum into their practices (Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, and Manning 1996). As part of this project, Rich has been interviewed and observed in his classroom a number of times over a two-year period. In his late 40s, Rich has been teaching elementary school for more than 25 years and has taught several different grades from 1–8, a special education class for slow learners, a gifted program, and both physical education and mathematics as a specialist teacher. He currently teaches a grade 8 core program in a middle school (grades 7 and 8) in a very ethnically diverse, lower-middle class area of a large urban school system. Rich's approach to assessment is not only well received by parents and students, but it is also coherent with his teaching and classroom practice.

PURPOSE IS PARAMOUNT

The purpose of assessment in Rich's class is almost exclusively one of learning. Indeed, on some occasions he has replaced written report cards with both formal face-to-face interviews and continuing conversations with parents. These exchanges are based on carefully assembled portfolios of schoolwork that students bring to the interviews with them. Interestingly, these methods have occasioned no negative reactions.

Rich respects his students. He is convinced that they deserve to understand why he does the things he does. Assessment issues force him to be cognizant of what he is trying to accomplish with his students and to structure his assessment strategies to fit his purposes. Rich uses some innovative and creative strategies for teaching, assessment, and learning in his class, but activities are never undertaken just because they are fun or easily available. Everything in Rich's classroom fits within a broader conception of the curriculum and is designed to enhance student learning. He explains:

> *There has to be a purpose. I have found in the past that if you do something, a kid will say, "Why are you doing that? Where does that fit in?"*

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[1] Rich Cornwall teaches in the Scarborough, Ontario, school district. He is a recent winner of the Prime Minister's award for mathematics teaching.

> *And this is what I want kids to do: I want them to question. If I can't give them an answer, then why am I doing it?. . . For example, the de Bono puzzles, the thinking puzzles. I'll build on them so you can read them in math. de Bono has one that's like a chess game that he plays, with strategy, and I have adapted it as a transformational geometry game that the kids play. It's the same game, but I have a different purpose, so I change the rules to suit the mathematical concept.*
>
> *In novel study, I ask the kids to write a response using a newspaper format. They have to give the newspaper a name, create a headline, do a picture, and write an article. For each chapter they take a different section of the newspaper and use the format to do the response. Some of them have done political cartoons. One wrote an obituary for a character. I'm looking at how they are responding in writing for different audiences and different purposes. They know that.*

NO SURPRISES

When students and parents, as well as teachers, understand what is expected of them, they have a much better chance of reaching to those expectations. Rich believes that assessment expectations and criteria should be visible to, and negotiable with, students and parents, so that they understand his expectations for learning. In addition, he feels that students and parents need to talk about the expectations together so they can enrich their understanding of the program and Rich's intentions. This belief translates into early and consistent engagement with parents, with lots of information and opportunities to discuss and respond to their children's school experiences. How different this is from the scenario in many schools of a large, anxiety-rousing open house or parents' assembly, orchestrated like a three-ring circus. Rich actively strategizes to create conditions for parents to work with their children. As he describes it:

> *I start early in September to get the students ready. We also make the parents aware. I send home a letter describing what I plan to do throughout the year. I explain about the student-parent conference and the reasons behind it, our commitment to open communication between the school and the parents, and our goal for kids to take responsibility for their own learning.*
>
> *Then, late in September, I send home a tracking sheet every day. The kids record what they've done in literacy and numeracy, and their feelings about it. The parents sign the sheets. In October, students do a weekly sheet. They start taking home pieces of work, and their parents can record comments about them.*
>
> *Sometimes I send home a checklist that the parents can use to talk with their children about their schoolwork. At times, students take home an in-*

> *formal report card and maybe five or six pieces of work to look over with their parents, who then may write comments and offer suggestions. On some of the pieces, I'll record a mark, on others a comment. In some cases, I'll ask the parents to evaluate them.*
>
> *For every topic, I send a letter home explaining what we are doing and why, as well as a few points that I'd like the parents to help with—maybe a checklist indicating that on such and such dates, these things should be done: "Would you please check them off, initial the list, and comment." Maybe they can even evaluate the schoolwork on a scale of 1–3, using headings like organization, appearance, things like that.*
>
> *When the school board put out the big sheet [a district-produced listing of all outcomes for grades 7, 8, and 9, with examples of indicators of success for each grade], I gave a copy to each parent and to each child. My students and I went through it: this is what we're doing, and this is why we are doing it. I asked the kids to look at some of their assignments and to show me what they had done to achieve a certain outcome. A lot of them can tell you what they've done—some can't.*
>
> *We look at different ways that student work could be evaluated. The kids and I made a rubric together, and then they assessed their work based on our criteria. They had to evaluate their own and make a comment on it; then they evaluated one another's (at least five other people evaluated each work). After that, I evaluated their work and sent it home with the rubric for the parents to put a comment on it.*
>
> *At least we are opening up communication with the parents. They understand to some extent what it's all about. I tell the kids, "You know what outcomes we tried to cover and why you are doing this." As we go through the list of outcomes, we check them off.*

In Rich's classroom, there are no surprises. Students know the learning targets, and they know how and why they will be evaluated as they strive to reach them. Parents are involved in continuous, reciprocal communication about their children's progress, and their children are vital partners in this process. Reporting is about communication, not mere information giving. Judgments do not arrive suddenly, by surprise, when it is too late to do anything about them. No secrets, no surprises: these are key principles of positive assessment practice in Rich's classroom.

KIDWATCHING AS ASSESSMENT

If assessment is a form of learning, teachers can't limit it to discrete activities controlled by clocks or calendars. Learning happens at any time, in all kinds of places. Assessment has to be there too, and so, therefore, does the observant eye of the teacher.

In Rich's classroom, watching kids is not a casual pastime, nor is it a surveillance activity. It is a dynamic and indispensable part of assessment. In his words:

> *As a teacher, you have to be aware of your students' learning styles, of what they can do. And you have to do that very quickly and accept what a kid is doing. Then you can go from there. . . . At the beginning of the year, I use math activities, lots of visual activities. I take some of de Bono's ideas, things I picked up from Howard Gardner, and I make these activities into math activities. I watch how the kids approach them and how they do them, and then I make decisions about the type of learning that each child did. . . . It's very easy to do through the math classes at the beginning of the year. Sometimes the kids don't even realize that they are doing mathematics because a lot of times it's just manipulating things or doing a visualization activity or sequencing. They are fun little games that the kids are doing. I do it with another purpose in mind. . . . It tells me a bit about their thinking.*

Rich takes advantage of and creates opportunities to watch and learn about how his students learn. He is not, however, always wandering with a checklist observing his students' every action. Rather, his purpose is diagnostic. His use of carefully planned tasks to elicit student responses helps him understand how his students are thinking.

STUDENTS BECOMING EXPERT ASSESSORS

It is important to involve students in the assessment process not just to avoid nasty surprises, but also to develop their own skills in self-assessment: an extremely valuable form of learning in itself. If students are to become critical thinkers and problem solvers who can bring their talents and knowledge to bear on a particular problem, then developing such skills of self-assessment and self-judgment is essential. They cannot just wait to be told the right answer. Self-appraisal is a vital human skill, both vocationally and socially throughout life.

Effective assessment practices empower students to ask reflective questions about their own learning and consider efficient strategies for learning what comes next. It is unlikely that students will become competent, realistic judges of quality on their own. They need to be taught skills of evaluation and to have routine and challenging opportunities to practice making judgments and validating them (Earl and Cousins 1995).

Assessment in Rich's class is interwoven almost seamlessly with instruction and learning. Students are very much in control of and responsible for their learning and for doing the work necessary to accomplish their goals. In fact, Rich's overriding theme with his students, right from the first day, is *choices*. Students do a lot of work on goal setting. They talk about making choices, recognizing the consequences of their choices, and solving problems arising from the choices that they make. As Rich says, "It's sort of the background of what I'm trying to do all the time, to have the kids make choices in whatever they do and assume responsibility."

The students are often working in situations where their self- and peer evaluations have real consequences, at least within the class. For one term they worked in groups set up as companies that had to produce a detergent (science). In addition, they had to market their product (language), develop a budget, create proposals for tenders, and make investments (mathematics and economics). Throughout the whole process, regular self-evaluation was critical to be sure that the company remained viable, because the bank balances depended on accuracy and wise decisions. In a novel twist, companies that completed their work accurately and quickly could become consultants to other companies, for a fee. If they completed the assessment correctly in ways that served their client's needs, they got paid; if not, no fee. Peer evaluation at its best.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Because learning is everywhere, the essence of *assessment as learning* for teachers lies in being a talented conductor with the complete musical score in their heads. They must hear the nuances of each instrument, intuit the emotions of the players, and subtly guide and extend the talent and virtuosity of each of them in very personal ways by providing feedback and encouragement on a moment-by-moment basis.

In this respect, Rich sees his role as one of knowing his students, providing resources, and establishing conditions for learning by structuring activities and instruction and by creating an environment where the students gain confidence and are motivated to learn. It is difficult to capture the flow of Rich's program in a few sentences, but the following example provides a glimpse. Part of one unit of work originated from viewing a video version of *The Prince and The Pauper* and seeing the musicals *Les Misérables* and *Oliver*. Rich connected these activities to a mathematics unit on probability and statistics in which some students selected English and French Law as a topic for a survey that they were to develop. Because these students were interested in comparing the similarities and differences, Rich taught them about debating, and they later staged a debate, entitled "Be It Resolved That English Law in the Time of Henry VIII Was Too Harsh."

In another example, Rich used a simple strategy to motivate and focus the students on a relatively mundane review of math concepts:

> *We had Mr. Bean[2] week in our class because two of the kids suggested it. Each student had a cutout head of Mr. Bean on a stick. The students could not speak. If they wanted to answer or ask questions, they had to hold up their pop-up of Mr. Bean and say the word* teddy. *Then they would write their answers or questions on a slate. (I gave all the children slates for all their communication.)*
>
> *The fact that there was no verbalizing was novel for the students. Some of them liked the idea of communication without language. It was a challenge. When they started off, they weren't sure what to do, but then they used the slate a lot—and quite effectively because they were asking some good questions. They were more focused on the actual math.*

Assessment occurs throughout these instructional times. Sometimes it is informal with a single student or a small group of students; sometimes peers judge and critique one another's work; other times students use different products or performances to demonstrate their learning. Throughout it all, Rich observes, records, and shares his perceptions with the students. He explains:

> *As a class, we take an example. We talk about the outcome and different ways of presenting the material. And then we look at different ways it could be evaluated, and we make up criteria together.*

Making Reporting Real!

Grading and reporting of student achievement are major issues of contention everywhere. Parents repeatedly say that they want simple, clear, straightforward messages and that they are routinely frustrated by the limited or jargon-ridden information in report cards.

Everything that occurs in Rich's class is fair game for sharing. He keeps parents informed about all of their child's projects, especially what he hopes the students will gain from them. The students are not only privy to his thinking, but they often contribute to it and may even initiate projects. As a class, they talk about their learning and about what evidence they have that understanding or skills are developing. As noted earlier, the term sometimes culminates in a student-directed parent interview. Early in the term, the students prepare a personal portfolio with a logo and a collage that visually represents their interests and goals. They also set goals for the term. They keep selections of their work and reflections on them in the portfolios. As the interview date approaches, the students begin their planning. Rich describes what happens:

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[2] In the television series "Mr. Bean," British comedian Rowan Atkinson stars as the title character, who doesn't speak and often carries a teddy bear.

> *They have to plan a one- to three-minute opening to introduce themselves. Then, sharing the contents of their portfolios, they talk a bit about outcomes. In advance, they have prepared an outline for each piece of work to guide their discussion of what was expected of the piece, how it met those expectations, and what they should have done to improve it. At the end of the interview, parents have the opportunity to provide feedback on a summary sheet.*
>
> *What I generally explain to my students is,"You're going to talk about yourself and your successes. You're going to set a few goals, explain to your parents about goal setting, how successful you were this term, how you feel about what you've done this term . . . what you have learned by doing this." We have a chance to practice two or three times before the interviews, and some students practice at home. Then they go ahead and do it.*

Rich is very aware that this process is a departure from typical practice and of the need for parental understanding.

> *You have to have the support of the parents. That's why I get them involved. I know parents want to be involved, but sometimes they don't know how to do it. One of the most positive things that has come out of these interviews is that the parents sit down for two to three hours and listen to their child. The interviews occur over several days and/or evenings, so small groups of parents have a chance to mingle and often listen in on the other students.*
>
> *A lot of good things come out of these experiences. Parents meet one another for the first time. You've got, say, four kids, who are from four different areas of the world, and their parents are sitting there talking about the kid who is making the presentation. Then they start talking about the system and things like that.*

Rich sees reporting as an extension of the continuing conversation that he has established with his students and their parents. This conversation is not one-sided, and Rich doesn't have all the answers. Instead, the interview is a process that allows the parents to talk to their own child and to the teacher, as well as to share their observations and opinions with other parents.

Rich is a good teacher, but his teaching and assessment practices are not magical. In fact, he sees them as rather ordinary. What makes them notable is their clear coherence with and connection to Rich's views about learning and his consistent focus on helping his students learn.

ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING

Assessment is one of the most powerful levers for enhancing student learning and bringing about positive educational change. Using assessment as a change agent is risky business, however, because the process is neither straightforward nor rational. Assessment is, by definition, judgmental. It is a deeply personal and emotional experience for the student being assessed; and it can have a far-reaching impact on individual students, on educators, and on the nature of the society in which they live. It is no wonder that decisions and ideas about assessment practices and assessment reform are often not reasoned, logical, or objective. They are too closely tied to people's deeper beliefs, their fears, and their aspirations.

Personal beliefs (often tacit) about assessment represent many varied perspectives, which almost always arise from quite different epistemologies (Nuttall 1994). Some people hold that educational change (and presumably improved student learning) is best realized within the purview and responsibility of some *external* individual or group in authority who has the power and the mandate to judge quality, exercise control, and order compliance. Assessment is the mechanism for providing the evidence for these decisions. This view has its appeal in logic about the force and influence of accountability incentives. It is based on the assumption that educators have both the capacity and the ability to act in different and more productive ways but are unfocused, recalcitrant, lazy, or unmotivated. The obvious response is to apply pressure and issue directives about educational reform and expect increased student learning.

Others believe that educational change and improved student learning are *internal* processes that the people who live and work in classrooms (teachers and students) must undertake. Assessment is an opportunity for them to reflect, question, plan, teach, study, and learn. Assessment reform, for those who hold this view, is not connected to compliance with mandates but is rooted in the constructivist view that learning depends on self-monitoring and reflection. These reformers assume that many teachers do not have current knowledge or skills about changing theories of learning or assessment. Like their students, teachers are learners who require support to acquire knowledge and training before they can change their practices. Assessment reform, in this perspective, provides an opportunity for teachers to share ideas, to achieve agreement about consistent and equitable expectations for quality, and to create feedback loops directed toward changing the way they teach. Linda Darling-Hammond (1992) describes these two different epistemological views in this way:

> Two very different theories of school reform are working in parallel and sometimes at cross-purposes. . . . One theory focuses on tightening the controls: more courses, more tests, more directive curriculum, more standards enforced by more rewards, and more sanctions. These reformers would improve education by developing more tests and tying funds to schools' test scores. . . . A second theory attends more to the qualifications and capacities of teachers and to developing schools through changes in teacher education, licensing, and certification processes, . . . professional development schools, efforts to decentralize school decision making while infusing knowledge, changing local assessment practices, and developing networks among teachers and schools (p. 22).

One of the refrains in current criticisms of education has been unhappiness with assessment practices, both large-scale and teacher-generated. In the United States (by far the most testing-oriented nation in the world), complaints about traditional multiple-choice tests include (1) that, even though they are carefully designed to be psychometrically reliable and valid, they encourage instruction that emphasizes rote tasks focused on low-level knowledge and skills; and (2) that they lead to teaching to the test, narrowing of the curriculum, and an emphasis on shallow and superficial opinions at the expense of reasoned and disciplined thought (Darling-Hammond 1994). Another concern is that large-scale testing programs may be fundamentally inequitable and disadvantage many groups of children. In Ontario and some other parts of Canada, on the other hand, where teachers' judgments have been the paramount assessment system for many years, complaints include the following: report cards are too vague, marks are biased or unfair, there is no consistency from school to school or teacher to teacher, and teachers' assessment practices lack rigor.

There is also evidence that teacher-generated tests currently assess mainly recall, recognition, and low-level skills (Rogers 1991). It appears that both standardized tests and teacher-generated tests are inadequate. But can we rectify this problem? Caroline Gipps (1995) argues that we must first decide what assessment is for, not in the abstract, but in each particular case:

> We need to develop a new way of thinking about assessment to deal with the issues that are emerging as assessment takes on a broader definition and purpose. . . . We must first ask the question "Assessment for what?" and then design the assessment program to fit (p. 3).

Assessment is not a single entity, nor does it have a singular purpose or audience. In *Expanding Student Assessment*, Walt Haney (1991) states that "trying to use one test for a range of purposes is rather like trying to use one tool—say a screwdriver or a hammer—for jobs ranging from brain surgery to pile driving" (p. 144).

It is time for a tool-kit full of instruments so that we can select the appropriate one for each purpose and use it with finesse. Even more important, it is time to be clear about the intended purposes and the likely uses, because purposes will determine how students, teachers, and schools respond. For example, if an assessment is to be diagnostic, the process should expose students' weaknesses. It would be foolish to expect students (or their teachers) to take the risk of exposing weaknesses in a selection exam or if the test will be used to hold the school accountable for the performance of its students.

Historically, the primary purpose of assessment has been evaluative. Students have been given tests and exams (whether designed by the teacher or delivered as part of a systemwide testing program) to sort and order them as a basis for making selection decisions—bestowing status, opportunity, and value on some and excluding or diminishing others. This perspective explains much about the forms of assessment that dominate education today. The criteria for evaluating students' work were usually vague or kept secret, but they differentiated or sorted the students into groups in ways that were generally accepted as legitimate, and became the basis for opportunities that set the course of students' lives. Students have been funneled into the workplace or the next phase of schooling based on test or examination scores, and schools have developed reputations based on the success of their students.

The sorting/selecting evaluative process served to make decisions about most individual students well enough and went unchallenged, as long as there were plenty of places for the majority of them to lead productive and worthwhile lives that did not depend directly on passing or failing in school. When factories dominated our economy, the world was simpler, and the *factory model* of schools was consistent with the world around it. Like on an assembly line, we put kindergarten-size units of raw material onto the first bench of the plant and moved them sequentially through the stations. They spent a certain amount of time at each one. If, at the end of the allotted time, they weren't finished, we sorted them into various tracks to be given different treatments or labeled as the vocational or basic group (the seconds or rejects on the plant floor). The factory model fit the times very well because there were legitimate places for all young people to go—many to the farm and to manufacturing, some to business and service, and a few to university and the professions.

The prevailing beliefs about knowledge and learning were consistent with a manufacturing approach. Knowledge was considered to be inert, agreed upon, and settled *stuff* that had to be shifted from one location (e.g., teachers' minds, textbooks, chalkboards) to where it was supposed to go (i.e., students' heads). The obvious instructional approaches were things like drill and practice, recitation, and worksheets. Assessment focused on recall, reconstruction, and repetition of learned material. Standards for judgment amounted to identical correspondence between the taught material and its reproduction in the testing situation.

As the world has changed, the factory model is proving to be inadequate. For too many students, there is no productive future; there are major concerns about the fairness of the testing/selecting procedures; and employers are dissatisfied with even the successful products of the schools. The demands of a more complex society, and a more sophisticated view of knowledge and learning, mean that it is no longer sufficient for schools to simply rank-order students and sort them into groups, using crude criteria. Schools are expected not only to identify those most likely to succeed (or not to), but also to ensure that students develop and are competent in specific skill areas, not all of which are academic or tied to subject-based knowledge. All students, not just a few, are expected to attain the foundation skills of literacy and numeracy, along with more sophisticated skills like critical thinking, solving novel problems, making informed judgments, working independently and in groups, and discerning appropriate courses of action in ambiguous situations. These descriptions of the requirements for students who will live the bulk of their lives in the 21st century still contain the elements of basic skills and content knowledge, but they go far beyond in their scope and sophistication and demand quite different assessment practices (Earl and Cousins 1995).

There is no simple formula for finding a balance between these conflicting views. Pressing demands for increased accountability directives are combined with pleas for more and better assessment systems that provide rich data about specific student learning. These seeming contradictory forces have made assessment reform a somewhat schizophrenic activity. Can these two paradigms coexist and complement one another, or are they fundamentally different and likely to be constantly in each other's way?

One promising approach is to imagine a different conception of assessment: one that is rooted in the far past, one that holds assessment as an inextricable part of learning. It is ironic that the word *assessment* is derived from the Latin word *assidere:* to sit with (Wiggins 1993). Its very origin implies more than marks, percentiles, grade point averages, and cut scores. It also certainly suggests a perspective that eschews efficiency and economy as assessment hallmarks. Instead, it conjures up images of teachers observing students, talking with them, and working with them to unravel their understandings and their misunderstandings—transforming assessment into an integral part of learning that offers detailed feedback to the teacher and the student. As people learn and move from neophytes, to novices, to experts, assessment can give them models of performance and can clarify the assistance, experiences, and forms of practice that they need to improve and extend their performance.

The notion that assessment is part of learning is deeply rooted in a constructivist theory that learning is a process of taking in information, interpreting it, connecting it to existing knowledge or beliefs, and, if necessary, reorganizing understanding to accommodate that information (Shepard 1991). If people learn by constructing their own understanding from their experiences, assessment is not only part of learning, it is the *critical component* that allows the learners and their teachers to check their understanding against the views of others, and against the collective wisdom of the culture as it has been recorded in the knowledge, theories, models, formulas, solutions, and stories that make up the curriculum and the disciplines. The alternative is for learners to be passive and uncritical recipients of disconnected (and often conflicting ideas), without the skills to challenge or judge for themselves. The lives of young people are full of complex demands and important decisions with far-reaching consequences. We want them to

- Become lifelong learners who internalize seeking knowledge, not give the responsibility to others;
- Use assessment, feedback, instruction from teachers, self-monitoring, and practice;
- Hone, correct, and focus their learning; and
- Bring their talents and knowledge to bear on a particular problem, rather than wait for the teacher to tell them that an answer, an idea, or a product is right or acceptable.

ACCOUNTABILITY AS CONVERSATION

Some would say that giving responsibility for assessment to teachers and students renders the information useless as an accountability measure. Clearly, we cannot ignore the strong pull of accountability and its stranglehold on many politicians and members of the public. We contend, however, that narrow views of accountability and of assessment do indeed seem to be incompatible with using assessment to improve students' learning. While we do not wish to abandon the goal of accountability, we believe it is possible to redefine accountability in more constructive ways that can enhance the role of assessment in the learning process rather than undermine it (LeMahieu 1996).

Accountability is usually thought of as gathering information (like students' marks or district assessment results) and preparing a report so that interested parties have the information that they believe to be pertinent. When the report is done, the accountability requirement has been fulfilled. To our minds, however, this is more properly termed accounting, not accountability.

Accounting is gathering, organizing, and reporting information that describes the performance of a student or system—giving summaries of the state of affairs at a point in time that has already passed. By themselves, these reports have very little meaning. A young baseball fanatic might view a 40 percent average on his or her report card as fantastic because "an average like that in baseball would put me in the Hall of Fame." Reports and report cards do not speak for themselves. People need to make sense of them in light of their own experiences, contexts, and standards. Scores and reports can form the starting point for accountability (accounting is a necessary component of accountability), but they represent only a piece, not the whole puzzle.

In our broader interpretation, *accountability* looks forward and uses assessment information along with other knowledge and the hard thinking required to inform judgments about current performance and improvement plans. It includes a concerted effort to incorporate a "system of use" for interpreting and acting on information. Much more than a report card or school statistics alone, accountability is a deeply human enterprise that depends on open sharing of information and continuing conversations among and between educators, students, parents, and the community as they interpret and make sense of available information and establish action plans. When characterized this way, accountability is founded on genuine relationships that are based on trust and open sharing of information along with a willingness to engage in clear, candid, and considerate discussions together. Accountability discussions are not merely presentations with all the information going one way, and they don't end because a student appears unwilling or a parent is too busy to listen. Rather, they are likely to be lively and sometimes emotional, because the future of our children is an emotional topic.

GETTING THERE

Neither *assessment as learning* nor *accountability as conversation* will happen automatically. And they will not materialize just by placing assessment in the hands of teachers. Rich is, in some ways, exceptional. The assessment that most commonly occurs in many teachers' classrooms (e.g., test, exams, projects, assignments) still takes place at the end of something (e.g., units, courses) as a symbolic evaluation or terminal judgment of knowledge or skill—not as a way of contributing to learning. So if individual teachers are unlikely instigators of positive assessment reform, who else can help make assessment a fundamental part of learning? What can administrators and wider systems contribute here? What part can they play in developing assessment for learning when they are under such powerful pressure to increase and tighten up assessment for accountability?

Our glimpse of Rich's classroom earlier in the chapter illustrates how positive assessment change can reconcile and synthesize assessment as learning with broader purposes of accountability as we have defined them. Reconciling these purposes of assessment, we believe, depends on putting our trust in the capability of teachers—not necessarily in what many teachers currently do, in assessment terms, but in what they are capable of doing, given the right kinds of support. But what kind of support does this call for? Administrators and school systems are often seen as undermining good classroom learning with their intensive assessment demands, carried out in the name of accountability. Can they instead support teachers to interpret assessment and accountability purposes in ways that enhance the learning process in their classes? To illustrate this possibility, we turn to a second example.

In the summer of 1992, the Pittsburgh Public School District began using student performance in writing using portfolios for public reporting on the performance of a school system (LeMahieu, Eresh, and Wallace 1992). Over a two-week period (approximately 815 person-hours), 25 teachers and support professionals completed the scoring of 1,250 writing portfolios as well as attendant training and calibration. Teachers developed the scoring rubrics for this portfolio system, which require high levels of interpretation and judgment, inductively through review and evaluation of a large volume of student work.

The Pittsburgh portfolio project both depends on and contributes to the capacities of teachers. In fact, the project was founded on the belief that teachers can develop and internalize expectations for students' work by working together to achieve consensus. It explicitly fostered capacity building in assessment skills among its teachers. During the initial phase, large numbers of teachers met regularly (at least monthly for up to two days at a time) over an extended period (two years) to develop the portfolio system and its assessment components. Throughout this time, they shared and closely reviewed student portfolios. The simple guiding question that focused teachers' discussions was, "What can we tell about this student as a learner?" Project staff closely documented and analyzed their discourse to identify the points of judgment. These points provided the beginnings of emergent evaluative frameworks to be shared with the rest of the teachers in the district. The performance assessment process (or assessment conversations, as they have come to be known) is itself a learning process for the teachers. These conversations permit teachers to

- Look closely and deeply at student work,
- Develop shared notions of quality in students' performances or products,
- Determine what constitutes adequate evidence of quality, and ultimately
- Reflect upon the learning experiences that can produce the desired performances.

Out of these assessment conversations have come two realizations. First, all who participate in them leave with higher and more clearly articulated aspirations for student performance. This should not be the least surprising, as the derivation of criteria and expectations is essentially additive. One professional has certain expectations, while the next recognizes some (but perhaps not all) and adds more. The assessment conversations proceed until the final set of aspirations (or criteria) are far greater (and clearer) than anyone's initial framework. The second effect of these assessment conversations is that teachers begin to develop a shared interpretive framework for regarding student work. These expectations, made up of high, commonly held and applied criteria, become commonly understood across professionals and more consistently applied across students. Over time, these conversations, begun with the group of teachers involved in developing the assessment, have been replicated in professional development activities throughout the entire district and in its several schools. In addition to contributing to a shared interpretive framework, the process has provided reliable assessment information to support public accounting of the school district's performance, based on judgments about student work contained in portfolios (LeMahieu, Gitomer, and Eresh 1995).

The Pittsburgh process represents a form of teacher *moderation* or *collaborative assessment*. This emerging approach appears to show high promise for promoting and establishing genuine changes in how teachers regard and assess their students' work and use that assessment for learning. The concept is based on the very simple premise that more heads are better than one. When teachers work together to establish criteria for judging their students' work, set standards, and make group decisions, the collaboration has many spin-offs.

This extremely powerful form of professional development brings teachers together to talk about learning, not just in abstract terms, but about students' work. Working together in this way, teachers tend to

- Enhance one another's understanding of instruction and curriculum,
- Develop agreement about the nature and quality of the instruments and approaches for assessing their students' work,
- Challenge and question their own beliefs about expectations for students, and
- Develop more confidence in their decisions and in their accountability to the outside community.

Moderation techniques, coupled with training and clear criteria for judging, can enhance the consistency of the judgments that teachers make (Gipps 1995). Because inconsistency is one of the most troublesome characteristics of assessments done by teachers, this combination holds promise as the link between assessment for learning and assessment for accountability; establishing confidence in teachers' judgments as a basis for open conversations with parents and community members, while providing continual feedback to students.

Assessment is serious business. Its status in the school reform agenda is legitimate. What may be missing or vague is a picture of the powerful role it can play, not to threaten or tempt both teachers and students, but as clues in a sophisticated game of mystery, guiding the player to ever higher levels.

When assessment is seen as learning, teachers are the key, with responsibility for the breadth and depth of students' expression of learning. Everything we've discussed in this chapter points to the pivotal role of professional support and training in the success of the assessment reform process. Assessment reform, like so many other aspects of contemporary reform, prizes human judgment to a greater degree than in the past. There is a necessary responsibility to warrant that judgment through effective professional development. Intensive support for teachers to meld assessment, instruction, and curriculum is critical to creating the kinds of changes that will transform learning. The challenge is for teachers to learn and evolve together in order to ensure that the messages they transmit are defensible and trustworthy.

Although individual teachers like Rich can often create their own staff development, for many, this is difficult and unlikely. Schools, districts, and unions more like the partnership that evolved in Pittsburgh can play a key role in providing conditions for teachers to become expert assessors. As assessment and evaluation become more demanding and more public, teachers are discovering that they have a great deal to learn about measurement principles. They routinely express interest in improving the quality of their assessment practices (Stiggins, Conklin, and Bridgeford 1986) and flock to conferences and workshops about assessment. Their concern and interest open the doors for fostering a continuous improvement model of teacher development.

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9

Collaborative Action Research for Educational Change

RICHARD SAGOR

It is difficult to imagine any strategy offering more potential for positive school-level change than involving teachers in "collaborative action research." In the action research community, "collaboration" conveys numerous meanings. For Tikunoff and Ward (1983) and Lieberman (1986), collaboration refers to a partnership between practitioners and supporters from outside the school. Joyce, Wolf, and Calhoun (1993) and Glickman (1993) use the term to refer to work initiated through a faculty decision-making process and consequently mandated as a schoolwide priority. The work of my colleagues and I at Washington State University's Project LEARN, which is represented in this chapter, defines the *collaborative* aspect of collaborative action research as the voluntary, collegial involvement of teams of teachers at the same site as they pursue joint inquiries into areas of significant personal/professional concern.

One would have to look long and hard to find a single school endeavor that incorporates more of the essential findings of the change literature than collaborative action research. This type of professional work builds on *felt needs;* participation in it is *voluntary;* it focuses on *educationally critical issues;* the strategy calls for *mutual adaptation;* the resultant data build *teacher efficacy;* when properly implemented, the participants receive *ample support;* and what participants learn from information, as it is uncovered, *puts pressure on them* to change. Considering all of its strengths, we thought that collaborative action research must be *the* elusive elixir that will motivate and sustain change in every school setting! In actuality, however, nothing is that magical. Change doesn't proceed so smoothly. In real schools, the collaborative action research change process, like other change strategies, is never simple.

On a positive note, through our work with dozens of schools that have been actively pursuing school improvement through teacher inquiry, we are now beginning to get a good idea of just what is needed to successfully use collaborative action research for school change. Further, these insights are helping us to understand the entire change process better.

In this chapter, we'll review a model of educational change through collaborative action research that my colleagues and I have been pursuing through Project LEARN (League of Educational Action Researchers in the Northwest [Sagor 1991]). We'll also review some of the salient findings from our examinations of both the successes and the shortcomings of schools involved with these efforts.

THE MODEL FOR CHANGE

For too many teachers in too many schools, the job of educator is more akin to blue-collar work than creative professional practice. Their experience differs significantly from that of many other practitioners engaged in similar creative professional pursuits. For example, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, and other professionals engaged in creative problem solving routinely collaborate with others on their projects. Generally, the strategies they employ in their practices have grown from innovations and/or insights developed either by them or generated by practitioners engaged in similar work. Moreover, rather than relying on the judgments of administrators, most doctors, lawyers, engineers, and architects engage in continuous quality control over their own work.

Conversely, in our view, three of the major factors that keep much teacher work in a "blue-collar" mode are that teachers

1. Work in isolation,

2. Are generally excluded from knowledge production, and
3. Are subjugated to external quality control.

These three features of teaching lead to devastating consequences for educational change and reform. Not only do they make teaching unattractive for many of the best and brightest coming out of college, but many of those who do persevere in teaching learn that it is more important to satisfy their supervisors or to meet legislative mandates than to inquire into the best practices for working with particular students and in unique situations.

In our search for mechanisms that could simultaneously encourage teacher collaboration, provide educators with data that are helpful and relevant to pressing educational concerns, and modify the accountability structures of schools (by restructuring teaching according to principles of self-regulation more than top-down control), we saw significant merit in collegial teacher research.

WHAT IS ACTION RESEARCH?

From a review of 40 years of the literature, it is clear that many types of activities coexist under the umbrella "action research." Yet, regardless of the various distinctions, the flow of action (practitioner) research usually follows six sequential steps:

1. Formulating a problem,
2. Planning for data collection,
3. Collecting data,
4. Analyzing data,
5. Reporting results, and
6. Taking action (Sagor 1992).

While these six steps form the backbone of a strategy for using collaborative action research to foster educational change, it is important to acknowledge some significant differences in emphasis in action research. Next, we'll look at three of them.

THREE BASIC THRUSTS OF ACTION RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

The voluminous literature on teacher-directed action research can be divided into three separate, yet overlapping, categories: action research for *teacher development*, action research for *school development*, and action research for *organizational development*.

Action Research for Teacher Development

By far, the lion's share of commentary and experience in teacher action research has focused on helping individual educators to become better reflective practitioners (Schon 1983). The theory behind this approach is that when teachers elect to develop the habits of mind and the disciplines of inquiry that result from repeated experience with the action research process, they not only become more effective practitioners, but also more fulfilled educators. But such involvement in reflective practice does not automatically lead to school change.

Research and experience show that while reflection may be a necessary condition for change, it is, by itself, far from sufficient. Most of the change literature makes it clear that the critical unit of change in education is the school as a whole (Goodlad 1975, Fullan 1991). While elementary school teachers in particular may successfully close their doors and exercise significant control over a particular classroom, meaningful change in the educational experience of many students occurs only when the impact of that change is felt schoolwide. Research also indicates that regardless of how innovative and energetic an individual teacher might be, he or she can easily wither or burn out in a hostile school environment (Johnson 1990). Last, as Michael Fullan's final chapter in this Yearbook shows, the very teachers who are attracted to individual teacher research are usually those who are already most predisposed to change. While this type of research may make teaching more rewarding for some of our finest teachers, it has not, and probably should never have, been expected to motivate those who are initially less disposed to change.

Action Research for School Development

Ever since the "effective schooling" movement took hold, educators have been investing in various forms of schoolwide action research. Frequently, these strategies are called by other names (for example, school profiling, Program Quality Reviews, self-study). When examined closely, however, these strategies all follow the same six-step process. What was new with many of these recent initiatives, however, was the use of action research to promote additional goals; specifically, those of building community and producing solidarity for school improvement efforts (Glickman 1993, Joyce et al. 1993). These educators viewed schoolwide action research as a mechanism to help entire school communities gain focus, see the results of their collective performance, and then take collective action in accordance with outcome data.

The logic that underscores this approach seems quite sound. After all, in high-performing "effective schools," faculties not only share common goals, beliefs, and visions, but teachers also routinely work together on program development. Most important, in these schools, monitoring and assessing student performance is an established part of the instructional process. While proponents of schoolwide action research may disagree on some fine points, the basic formats share certain essentials:

- The need for consensus on a focus for study, and
- (Some degree of) mandatory participation.

Again, the beliefs that undergird these requirements appear sound. With unity, one usually expects strength. In the real world of schools, however, pushing too strongly for consensus carries some heavy hidden costs. It often encourages *contrived collegiality* (Hargreaves 1994). Certainly, there may be an occasional school where 100 percent of the faculty is passionately concerned about the same issue and truly wishes to explore the same topic. Or one might find a place where everyone consistently coalesces around the same instructional priority at the same time. It is wonderful when this occurs, and it is in those rare venues where schoolwide action research can be a powerful stimulus for change. In most schools, however, even those with highly dedicated and energetic staffs, consensus on focus or priorities can be not only *difficult*, but *costly*, to achieve.

Consensus can be *difficult* to obtain because the more dedicated a staff is, the more reluctant some members will be to compromise their personal passions for the sake of group solidarity. Consensus can be a *costly* strategy because the price that frequently must be paid to achieve unity is pushing some priority issues to the periphery. Consequently, with schoolwide action research, consensus decision making about which topics to study can push a faculty to agree on noncontroversial and, unfortunately, nonessential topics. When this type of *contrived collegiality* occurs at a school, it comes at a significant cost to potential human energy.

An analogy may help illustrate such costs. Would any of us truly believe that medical care would be better at a hospital where the entire staff was required to agree on one focus for a particular year's studies—for example, examining new approaches to anesthesia or radiology? Or would we expect quality of care to be enhanced if members of each department or group of professionals in a medical center felt free and encouraged to invest all of their creative intellectual energy into matters of pressing professional concern to them and their patients? I suspect most of us would prefer to be cared for in the latter environment! This leads to the third thrust for action research.

Action Research for Organizational Development

It has become popular to think of successful schools as *learning organizations* (Senge 1995). This is not surprising because the research has overwhelmingly supported the finding that schools with organizational cultures that support inquiry, learning, and data-based decision making are not only more satisfying workplaces, but also more productive organizations (Rosenholtz 1989). This raises a key question for leadership: how might a leader use the strategy of teacher-conducted action research to build and support the cultural and organizational development of a school as a place of learning and inquiry for all?

To begin answering this question, we might ponder what types of activities educators would engage in, and receive support with, in an actual learning community. Certain characteristics of professional work in these schools would be routine and accepted. For one, professionals would engage in and derive the benefits of "natural collaboration." They wouldn't see teaching as solitary work, but neither would they find themselves forced into *contrived collegiality* with partners who do not share their needs and passions. In a natural (noncontrived) work setting, educators would constantly be creating and recreating work teams based on emergent goals and shared needs.

Second, educators in learning communities would regularly engage in learning with and from their colleagues. Learning organizations possess an atmosphere marked by fascination, openness, debate, and professional discourse. One of the best ways to understand the culture of a school community is simply by listening to the nature of both formal and informal discourse. Topics discussed in the faculty room and teacher lunch room, the agendas at faculty meetings, and the substance of teacher workshops—all of these can speak volumes about the prevailing norms and values of any school's culture.

Third, in learning communities, teachers would receive support and encouragement to try promising innovations and make program changes that have persuasive data or strong theoretical support.

Finally, in learning communities, one would find teachers conducting action research with colleagues. In these schools, research findings and data would be discussed routinely, and teachers would be encouraged to pursue data-based innovations. Put succinctly, schools that have become learning communities are places where two of the most crucial norms identified as essential for effective schooling—collegiality and experimentation (Little 1982)—are alive, well, and being actively nurtured.

The Project LEARN Strategy

After examining these three basic thrusts of action research, we became convinced that the approach with the greatest potential for fostering positive educational change and, more important, for systematically altering the work of educators was "action research for organizational development" (Sagor 1991). Among the benefits we saw of using this strategy was its potential to foster deep structural change. By becoming immersed in data, educators would likely begin to view their programs as ever-evolving works in progress (see Schlechty 1990).

The Project LEARN strategy was built on providing support for teacher teams through training workshops and the on-call availability of a cadre of critical friends willing to consult with teacher/researchers. The only prerequisite for joining Project LEARN was that teachers should be truly interested in acquiring and using the skills of action research on an issue that met three criteria:

- It pertained to teaching and learning.
- It was within the teacher's sphere of influence.
- The teacher cared deeply about the issue.

Approximately 25 hours of project workshops/work sessions focused on the processes for conducting valid inquiries. Project LEARN trainers provided guidance on procedures, but steadfastly avoided offering advice on content. The structure of our program purposefully reinforced the notion that the teacher/participants were *the* content experts.

Formulating a Problem

The first element of the six-step action research process is choosing a focus area. In the early fall, we devoted almost 10 hours (one third) of total workshop time to *problem formulation*. We allocated this much time because of our deep belief that reflecting on a focus area of significant meaning to the individual teacher and deeply examining that area were essential first steps for an action researcher. Further, we knew that given the harried nature of school life, if work session time wasn't devoted to reflection on potential issues for study, such reflection probably couldn't occur.

REPORTING RESULTS

Another element of the six-step process is delivering public reports on one's action research. By emphasizing *reporting*, Project LEARN differed significantly from many other educational action research support programs. Frequently, scholars who have worked in the action research field have argued that the goal of action research is solely to inform the actor who is the subject of the research. They have considered other audiences or research consumers beyond the individual action researcher to have minimal importance at best. When Project LEARN began, we did not fully realize how dramatic a cultural change we were envisioning. Neither did we consider the degree to which "collegial sharing" deviated from traditional practice, nor how serious an obstacle it would be to overcome.

As incentives for their first action research projects, we offered participants low-cost college credit for engaging in training and completing their research. To fulfill university clock-hour requirements, teachers were expected to make a formal presentation of their findings to an appropriate group of educators. At first, we were surprised that participants preferred to present to *any* professional audience other than to the faculty at their own school. "Why," we asked them, "would you prefer to talk to hundreds of anonymous strangers at a national conference than to your immediate colleagues?" They told us that because of the prevailing cultures in their schools (reputedly some of the best in the region), using a faculty meeting as a forum to talk to colleagues about what one had learned from personal practice would be perceived as violating a sacred norm. In their schools, they said, taking the floor to report on one's classroom was equivalent to saying, "I'm better than the rest of you!"

That realization triggered two Project LEARN responses. The first was the creation of annual symposiums for presenting teacher action research. These annual conferences are conducted in high-quality convention-type formats (at luxury hotels, with catered meals), all the while providing safe environments for first-time presenters. Emotional safety is pretty much assured, as most attendees at our conferences are either interested peers and/or other action researchers.

Our second response to this problem of culture was to do everything we could to encourage the development of regular times and venues, *inside the schoolhouse*, for this type of collegial sharing of teacher inquiries.

CAN "ANY SYSTEM BE THE SOLUTION"?

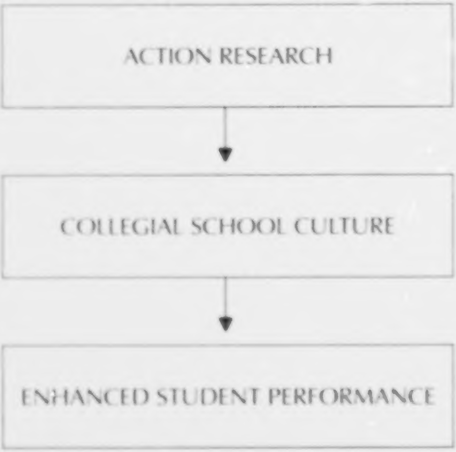
In the 1960s, well before the break-up of Ma Bell, AT&T employed a corporate slogan that captured the era's infatuation with efficiency: "The System Is the Solution." Although that slogan hardly reflects the downsizing flavor of the 1990s, it still highlights a resistant, seductive, albeit naive, notion about school improvement. Many educational leaders, even those professing to be jaded by experience, will frequently trudge off to national conferences or sign up to attend inservice programs in the hope that they will hear about some new magic elixir, an all-powerful remedy for what is ailing us. In our early work with Project LEARN, we also fell into this trap. As alluded to earlier, we almost convinced ourselves that we had discovered the magical potion that would effectively produce and support educational change for everyone!

Our reasoning certainly appeared sound. The Project LEARN process took into account most of the essential findings from the change literature:

- Action research projects are chosen based on a *felt need*.
- Participants *adapt* their work to meet local conditions.
- *Time* is provided for implementation.
- *Consultants* are available to assist on demand.
- Opportunities to *share and learn from one another in safety* are provided.
- *Experimentation* is encouraged.
- *Risk* is minimized.
- Appropriate *pressure and support* are built into the system.

It seemed that under these circumstances not only would all participants succeed with their projects, but they would also find them rewarding, fun, and motivational. Further, because teachers created all of the projects themselves, we felt certain that their enthusiasm would foreshadow the institutionalization of action research at their sites. We really believed this because we were confident that the new-found professionalism of these teachers would prove contagious to their colleagues. Finally, we were all but certain that students would be the ultimate beneficiaries, as had been demonstrated in Judith Warren Little's (1982) effective schools research. This initial perspective on the impact of collaborative action research on student learning is illustrated in Figure 9.1.

FIGURE 9.1
Impact of Collaborative Action Research


ACTION RESEARCH
COLLEGIAL SCHOOL CULTURE
ENHANCED STUDENT PERFORMANCE

So, did it work out that way? The answer is sometimes *yes* and sometimes *no*. We soon realized that the key to producing a school truly open to change was more than just using the right "system." The shortcomings of relying on a *system-as-solution* approach can be seen in our "Tale of Two High Schools."

A TALE OF TWO HIGH SCHOOLS

As mentioned earlier, the six-step action research process begins with problem formulation. In Project LEARN, we accomplished this in relaxed workshop environments. Participants engaged in activities such as analyzing teaching journals, conducting reflective interviews, participating in group interviews, brainstorming ideas, and drawing visual representations of their concerns. They were given adequate time for reflection on any and all issues that surfaced. Then, teachers had opportunities to go it alone, find new research partners, or even raise additional topics, if necessary. Project LEARN was committed to seeing that no teacher joined a group or worked on a topic unless he or she personally felt it worth both the effort and the time!

It was in this context that an unanticipated event occurred. Two high schools sent teams to training, and each ended up selecting an almost identical focus area: *how to increase student motivation for academic success*. As both teams attended the same training workshop, experienced the same activities, and were exposed to the same expectations, many significant variables remained constant across the two cases. Because each school was from a district where the central administration encouraged and supported participation, it appeared that external support was another essentially controlled variable. If "the system was to be the solution," one should have expected the results at both schools to be strikingly similar. But, alas, they were not!

Several months into their projects, we surveyed all teacher/researchers about the status of their projects. When we analyzed the data, startling contrasts began to appear. At School A, every member of the research team agreed that the project was thriving. When asked why, teachers expressed comments like the following:

- Everyone on our team views our project as useful.
- The importance and timeliness of our topic make it essential.
- It is connected to our other programs.
- The administration provided all the time and support needed.
- Key members of the project team are determined to make it work.
- Our principal is committed to the project.
- Our school has a clear vision and a mission for continued improvement.

When we asked teachers from School B why their project was faltering, however, they replied with explanations like the following:

- We need more skills to create good questions and collect data.
- We could all benefit from a this-is-a-good-experiment/what-the-heck attitude.
- We lack leadership and time to meet.
- Our school doesn't have a vision.
- As a classroom teacher, I simply do not have the time to prepare, research, *and* teach.

Why would teachers who were voluntarily doing similar work come to see their work so differently? Further investigation at these schools lent support to a view that these differences in perspective were most likely attributable to preexisting factors at the school site. In the case of School A, these factors worked as *enablers of success*. With School B, they were precursors of problems.

WHAT FACTORS PREDICT SUCCESS WITH COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH?

In our continuing research, which included the examination of High Schools A and B, we are finding that school level, size, budget,[1] and central office support[2] do not explain the success of collaborative action research. Because research topics in Project LEARN are participant-driven and involvement is voluntary, the choice of content focus also seemed an unlikely explanation. Last, as in the case of these two high schools, because all participants attended the same training sessions, the quality or nature of the training did not explain either school's success or failure. So what caused teachers in one school to succeed with collaborative action research and embrace inquiry as part of their practice, while the other school dropped the whole process?

While conducting our own field studies at these and other Project LEARN sites, we began seeing sharp contrasts in the cultural profiles of schools where collaborative action research was thriving and those where it tended to be short-lived.

Our analysis (Sagor and Curley 1991) suggested that the following four cultural markers predicted whether action research would be a force for educational change in a school:

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[1] This research was conducted in a state with equalized funding across districts.

[2] All schools in these studies were encouraged to participate by their districts. We found that even though central office support was a constant, teachers in different schools perceived it differently.

1. A common focus. In schools that tended to stick with action research, the faculty members reported high "clarity on school goals," a tendency to "protect what's important," and the presence of "high expectations" as school norms. Conversely, where implementing action research was a struggle, school goals tended to be unclear, and priorities weren't afforded protection.

2. A collective locus of control (efficacy). In schools where action research tended to take hold, teachers generally felt that change was within their collective power, while at the schools that dropped action research, the tendency was to see meaningful change as determined by forces outside of the faculty's control.

3. Common cultural perceptions. In schools where action research was beneficial, faculty members perceived their school culture in remarkably similar ways, while at the struggling schools teachers held widely variant perceptions regarding the norms of their workplace.

4. An appreciation of leadership. In schools that stayed with action research, faculty members tended to appreciate the leadership (whether it came from administrators or teachers); they viewed leaders as supportive of their work and as committed to high expectations. In schools that dropped action research, teachers reported that they were unsure whether the leadership actually supported their work.

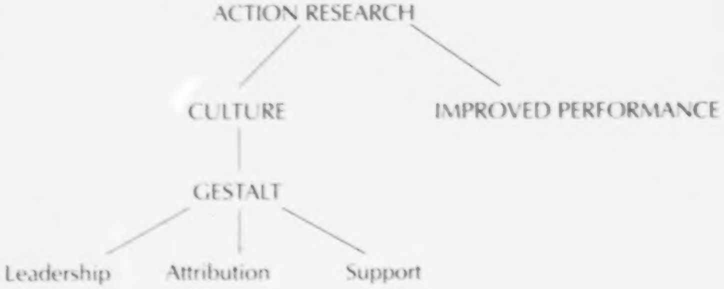
These findings lead us to a more complex conception of the role of collaborative action research in the change process. Having uncovered these preexisting conditions, we began to view action research for school change as a phenomenon strongly mediated by the culture of the school. That understanding is illustrated in Figure 9.2.

In the case of the two high schools, the four cultural markers (common focus, collective locus of control, common cultural perceptions, and appreciation of leadership) were the decisive factors. After only one year of participation with teacher research, the work had become only a vague memory for teachers at School B. For teachers at School A, however, many years after their first group inquiry into student motivation, the norms of group experimentation and collegial inquiry had become integral to the modus operandi of the school.

SO WHICH COMES FIRST? THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

Our evolving conception of how collaborative action research influences educational change brought out a perplexing paradox. We found that collegial teacher inquiry was a powerful vehicle for building

FIGURE 9.2
Action Research As "Effectiveness" Turbo Charger



the very cultural traits (common focus, collective efficacy, shared cultural perceptions, and appreciation of leadership) that were, ironically, prerequisite, for its success. Once we had learned that "the system wasn't the solution," we were left to ponder, "Which should come first the chicken or the egg?" Or more precisely: If we want to use collaborative action research as a vehicle for educational change, should we first invest in other culture-building activities, or should we start by encouraging collaborative action research as a means to build culture, knowing that there may be several cultural strikes against us?

There is no right answer to this question. However, by examining the experience of schools that have had success with collaborative action research, we may find some guidance.

A Look at Some Success Stories

"A Tale of Two High Schools" makes the point that by itself, collaborative action research probably won't turn a school around. Clearly, educational change is a complex, multivariate bundle of phenomena. Apparently, it takes the right mix of culture, history, leadership, and structural support to bring the full power of collaborative teacher research to fruition. The four case studies that follow illustrate how these ingredients can and have worked together to produce rich results.

BOLTON MIDDLE SCHOOL/WEST LINN, OREGON

Bolton Middle School is a 50-year-old school with a well-deserved reputation as a fine place to teach and a productive place for children to learn. Bolton began its experience with action research with the necessary prerequisites for success (common focus, collective efficacy, common cultural perceptions, and appreciation for leadership) already in place. The school had a history of quality leadership and, as a consequence of its years of demonstrable success, had built a strong base of community support, as well as high faculty morale. Over time, a powerful professional climate had evolved, as indicated by the faculty's congruence on 12 of the 14 variables measured by our school culture instrument (Sagor 1996). Not surprisingly, the Bolton faculty also exhibited a classic "irony of school improvement" (Glickman 1990). Like many successful schools, Bolton was "hesitant to act"or significantly change its formula for success.

That bias (the hesitancy to act) against change underwent a severe test a few years back. Bolton had a long history of tracking. The most senior faculty members felt strongly that ability grouping was one of the chief explanations for the school's continued success with its goal of "not permitting any student to fail." In recent years, however, a contingent of new hires had begun to advocate for heterogeneous grouping. It is with this background that 12 Bolton teachers ventured into action research training. Not surprisingly, all of these Bolton teacher/researchers wanted to investigate some aspect of either tracking or heterogeneous grouping. It was also no surprise that these teachers split almost evenly into two groups, one contending that a well-orchestrated tracking program would produce greater academic and emotional gains for students, and the other contingent predicting that mixed-ability classes would likely produce the superior outcomes.

Fortunately, the professional climate and atmosphere of respect among the faculty was great enough that no one feared negative consequences from these investigations. In fact, mutual respect was so high that most informed observers would have predicted that the faculty would ultimately adopt whatever set of hypotheses was borne out by these quasi-experimental studies. Those who knew Bolton well were sure that, above all else, these teachers were united about one belief: their care and concern for the well-being of the children.

What no one predicted (although, in retrospect, it should have been expected) was what actually occurred. Almost every student prospered, regardless of the treatment experienced. The students in the maximally mixed, heterogeneous classes did well academically and felt good about themselves and their peers. Their counterparts in the tracked classes not only appreciated their teachers' efforts to target instruction to their unique needs, but applied themselves rigorously to the tasks at hand, and then posted strong academic gains.[3]

What was unexpected, however, was that a consequence of these positive, yet clearly inconclusive inquiries was that the Bolton faculty unanimously agreed to dismantle the tracking system. The very teachers who had invested years in developing the ability-based program conceded that if their time-honored approach could not demonstrate clear superiority over mixed-ability grouping, then perhaps it was time to give the other approach a full and fair trial.

The Bolton Middle School experience illustrates how making decisions based on data derived from collaborative action research can assist a faculty in grappling with what is often an emotionally charged issue, all the while maintaining both reason and professional respect.

WILLAMETTE PRIMARY SCHOOL/WEST LINN, OREGON

Willamette Primary School, a K-5 elementary school in the same district as Bolton, contrasts in many ways with its sister school. Willamette opened without any history of success. In fact, the middle school previously housed in the same building and serving the same attendance area as Bolton had been historically regarded as the school to avoid (because of consistently poor student behavior and low academic performance). If Bolton was the middle school with the halo, then Willamette Middle School was adorned with horns!

The elementary school that replaced this historically weak middle school, however, was nothing like its predecessor. At the outset, Willamette Primary School enjoyed excellent leadership.[4] A highly regarded district teacher, Jane Stickney, was selected to be Willamette's first principal. She assembled a staff based on several criteria, one of which was their acceptance of what Principal Stickney called "the ethic of action research."

What evolved in the ensuing years ran counter to many current school trends. Once agreeing on shared beliefs, the Willamette staff felt little need to engage in "adoption mania," whether it concerned materials, programs, or structures. Stickney allowed, indeed encouraged, individual teachers and teams of teachers to design learning environments conducive to the growth and development of their students. Because the entire staff shared beliefs in basic values such as "providing developmentally appropriate instruction," they viewed deviations in instructional approaches not as encouraging anarchy but, rather, as a means to inquire into alternative ways to meet students' needs. For example, in the opening year, some teachers delivered thematic instruction in four-member teams, while others taught in pairs. Some worked with multi-aged groups, while others taught single grades. Yet all Willamette teachers openly spent time in reflection and inquiry, collected data, and enthusiastically attended faculty meetings and retreats, which became key venues for sharing action research findings.

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[3] This is likely a clear example of the Hawthorne effect with collaborative action research.

[4] I profiled Jane Stickney in "Overcoming the One-Solution Syndrome" (April 1995) in *Educational Leadership* 52, 7: 24-27.

In just two years this school, housed in a building with a 40-year history of poor performance, had become a high-achieving school with extraordinary faculty morale. Now, every year Willamette reconfigures itself in ways that local data suggest would be beneficial for achieving its visions and helping its students. At Willamette, understanding teaching and learning has truly become a *journey* not a destination.

TOMÁS RIVERA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Tomás Rivera Elementary School has certain attributes in common with Willamette, yet it differs substantially in other ways. Rivera is part of a much larger district, Riverside Unified, which is among the largest in California. Rivera opened in the fall of 1995 with faculty members, much like Willamette's, who had been selected primarily for their desire to face the uncertain challenges that lay ahead. But, unlike Stickney, Rivera Principal Susan Baltagi didn't just want affection for the "ethic of action research." She demanded a commitment from teachers to participate in action research, either individually or as part of a team, throughout their tenure at Rivera.

In addition to her willingness to be directive, Baltagi was equally aggressive about providing support. She arranged for six days of paid action research training (provided during work time) and critical friend support for the Rivera teachers (throughout their first year). She allowed teachers complete freedom in their choice of research topics. As a consequence, while conducting action research was mandatory at Rivera, flexibility in using it to answer critical questions of personal concern couldn't have been greater.

In late May, the school hosted "The First Annual Tomás Rivera Educational Research Conference," a powerful event attended by the entire teaching staff, visitors from neighboring schools as well as members of their central administration, and a smattering of university faculty. Functionally this conference was an inservice presented *by* the Rivera community *for* the Rivera community on what was learned *at* the Rivera community.

As a consequence of this first-year experience, the staff at Rivera have overwhelmingly agreed to continue their commitment to action research. Despite the innumerable trials and tribulations of opening a new school, they strongly believe that the focus on collaborative inquiry was a key factor in their success.

An important footnote to the Rivera experience is that seven teachers (44 percent of the faculty) started their teaching careers in the school's first year. We know that the most powerful "imprinting" experiences occur during a professional's induction year. Only time will tell of the actual long-term consequences for these seven teachers. But we have every reason to expect that being immersed in collaborative inquiry during their first exposure to public school teaching will have a long-lasting and profound impact on them.

Mountain View High School/Vancouver, Washington

As a large comprehensive high school, Mountain View has a structure quite different from the child-centered elementary schools of Rivera and Willamette. The combination of such features as a six-period day, a departmental structure, and a set of complex missions ranging from interscholastic athletics to the arts and from vocational education to college prep often seems to conspire to make it impossible for an entire high school to ever evolve a coherent culture that respects inquiry, experimentation, and collegiality.

Mountain View attacked these obstacles in a measured and deliberate way. The school's journey, which began seven years ago, is continuing today. For Mountain View, the first step was creating a shared belief that data were helpful when put to the service of school improvement. The school leadership accomplished this by developing (with no additional appropriations) an in-house research unit, labeled the Research and Development (R & D) Team. This team is made up of five teachers (each released from one period of instruction) and five staff members holding flexible schedules (for example, media specialists, counselors, administrators). The entire team shares preparation periods and assigned R & D periods strategically scheduled both before and after the lunch hour. With this schedule, the team has been able to meet for two and a half hours whenever necessary. The research agenda is assigned by the faculty. Whenever the teaching staff needs information, the task is assigned to R & D. Consequently, faculty meetings have become places to learn what R & D is surfacing about critical issues of community concern.

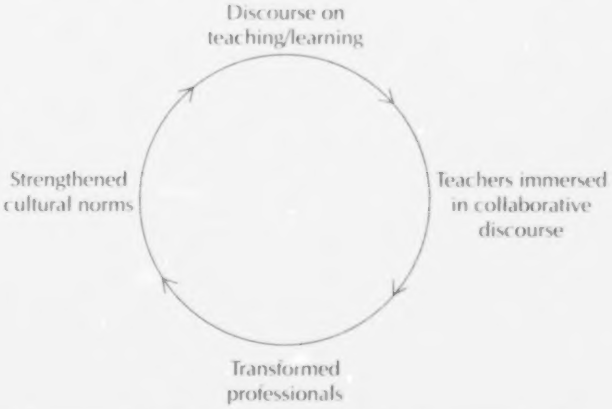
The second step for Mountain View involved expanding the facility's capacity with action research. As part of its collaborative relationship with Washington State University, Mountain View has provided action research training to more than two dozen faculty members (beyond R & D) as well as for parents serving on the school's Shared Leadership Team. As a result, when it was time for the school to conduct an accreditation self-study, the faculty chose to use the collaborative action research process as a means to examine both student and school performance as well as to inform the resultant School Improvement Plan. Through collaborative action research, all staff members—certified, classified, and administrative—have jointly become deeply engaged in examining issues that their school community deems worth knowing more about.

The final stage of Mountain View's strategy has put the action research technology just where it belongs, as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. Staff members have prioritized the 26 recommendations (the School Improvement Plan), which they derived from their performance-based self-study, based on both their centrality to the school's mission and the commitment of the faculty. Teachers are now voluntarily expressing a desire to develop and refine their research skills to better guide and assess the emergent school improvement agenda.

* * *

Having witnessed the experience of teachers at Bolton, Willamette, Rivera, and Mountain View, we have begun to understand the role of collaborative action research in the educational change process in a different and very exciting way. We now understand that it is not simply the act of conducting research that makes the difference for teachers in these schools. It is the transformational experience of working in an environment that is steeped in professional discourse that moves these educators in a continuously upward spiral in both their understandings and their practices. This lead us to our current view (see Figure 9.3) of the role of collaborative inquiry in the change process. As we now understand it, institutionalizing collaborative action research at a school can cause the culture to become transformational, and it is that culture that continuously fuels meaningful educational change.

FIGURE 9.3
Transformational Cycle


Discourse on teaching/learning
Teachers immersed in collaborative discourse
Transformed professionals
Strengthened cultural norms

How to Support Collaborative Action Research in School Change

Of all the lessons we have learned about collaborative action research as a mechanism for educational change, no factor has appeared more significant than a faculty's collective sense of efficacy. The adage, "If you think you can, you can, yet if you think you can't, you can't" is probably the *sine qua non* of change in school settings. Countless teachers have learned that feedback is the key to helping students develop self-regulating behaviors. Clearly, this is also true for teachers. However, teachers who, for whatever reason, believe that they are powerless to change teaching and learning in meaningful ways will perceive change projects as an investment in inevitable failure. They may even see action research as making matters worse, because the data that surface may only reinforce their feelings of powerlessness. For this reason, low-efficacy faculties often subscribe to the view, "What you don't know can't hurt you" and "Don't ask questions that you don't want answered."

Again, we are faced with an ironic conclusion. There is no better way to build up a faculty's efficacy than with data on the consequences of their actions. But faculties that are low on efficacy will try hard to avoid collecting any critical data. So how does one motivate educators, especially those with a vested interest in keeping their eyes closed, to open up to collaborative inquiry?

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the continuation of action research in a school and the potential for this collaborative work to be an enduring stimulus for change are directly tied to the quality of the school's leadership. In fact, in our work with schools, we have seen leaders persuade low-efficacy teachers to give collaborative action research a try. We have consistently observed that these leaders support teacher inquiry through specific actions. While the style of the leaders may differ greatly, each has found his or her own way to accomplish at least four purposes.

1. Pose questions that teachers cannot answer with their current level of knowledge. Invariably in the hands of good leaders such questions stimulate a professional's natural curiosity. This is never inductive questioning, with the leader asking only to check whether the teacher has memorized the correct answer. That type of checklist supervision doesn't fit in these successful schools. Rather, in these schools one sees leaders pondering aloud with teachers about pressing issues that really matter and which can only be understood through disciplined investigation.

2. Support teachers in carrying out their investigations. Whether it is by becoming a "limited partner" with a group of teachers in an action research project or by providing released time and training, leaders in the schools where action research thrives demonstrate to teachers that their work is valued and see to it that any necessary adjustments are made not only to help the teachers succeed, but also to feel appreciated for their efforts.

3. Publicly celebrate learning whether it is the outgrowth of success or failure. Through their behavior, these leaders demonstrate that learning and true understanding result from seeing what fails as well as examining what works. These leaders find ways to cultivate the view in their organizations that "all data are welcomed." By creating an atmosphere where people are willing to take risks and examine their results, a new openness to untried possibilities and potential emerges.

4. Model high expectations. Leaders in these schools are deeply committed to the success of *all* students. It is through their belief that all children can succeed with high-level work that the search for the better mousetrap becomes contagious. The experimentation that occurs in these schools is never viewed as change for change's sake. Rather, every inquiry, every pilot project, and every piece of data is an important addition to the jigsaw puzzle of universal school success.

Recently educators have begun using the term "self-renewing" to describe schools that have instituted a positive change ethic (Joyce et al. 1993). Nowhere is this term more aptly applied than in schools where collaborative action research has taken hold.

By seeking, welcoming, and then collegially discussing data on school and teaching performance, these teachers have achieved the *freedom* to challenge existing paradigms. But, perhaps more important, they have achieved the freedom to reinvent their work lives and the work lives of the teachers who follow them into those of true professionals. That, I believe, is an educational change truly worth striving for.

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10

Networks, Reform, and the Professional Development of Teachers

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Maureen Grolnick

The current effort to reform the nation's schools seeks to develop new and reframed conceptions of not only teaching, learning, and schooling, but also the practices, policies, and organizational settings for teacher learning (Darling-Hammond 1993, Lieberman 1995a, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin 1995). This growing sophistication about what it takes to restructure schools is stimulating interest in emerging forms of professional development. Although traditional professional development still dominates most schools and districts—consisting of a series of workshops, a long-term consultant to a district, or decontextualized staff development days—there is increasing awareness that new forms are both possible and desirable. The education we

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want for students—a wide array of learning opportunities, engagement and commitment to inquiry, access to real problems to solve, learning that connects to their prior experiences, opportunities to work with others—can be provided to teachers when they are the learners. One powerful conception of this kind of professional development is the educational reform network.

Toward a Definition of Networks

Networks engage school-based educators in directing their own learning, allowing them to sidestep the limitations of institutional roles, hierarchies, and geographic locations, while encouraging them to collaborate with a broad variety of people: socially, ethnically, institutionally, and so forth. Participants have opportunities to grow in a professional community that focuses on their development, providing ways of learning that are more in keeping with their lived professional lives (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin 1995, Little 1993, McLaughlin and Talbert 1993).

Although many educators have observed and participated in educational reform networks for some time, little has been written about how such networks are formed, what they focus on, and how they are sustained. Much of what we do know is anecdotal or drawn from studying single networks that have their own particular context and purpose (Sirotnik and Goodlad 1988).

The most important general study of networks, conducted by Allen Parker (1977) more than 20 years ago, described five key ingredients drawn from more than 60 networks organized for educational improvement. At that time he argued that each of these networks should have

- A strong sense of commitment to the innovation.
- A sense of shared purpose.
- A mixture of information sharing and psychological support.
- An effective facilitator.
- Voluntary participation and equal treatment (Parker 1977, p. 25).

A key insight for Parker was that members "have a sense of being part of a special group or movement" (p. 7). Parker's "key ingredients," and his observation about the role networks play in helping people work outside the system, served as the basis for an initial working definition for the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST) at Teachers College as we began to inquire into the nature of contemporary educational reform networks.

Contemporary Reform Networks

At NCREST, we have been learning more about educational reform networks, while helping to support and, in some cases, organize them. We started our study by conducting extended discussions with the leaders of three NCREST networks. These networks, unlike more permanent institutions, were intentionally constructed without rigid borders, buildings, or permanent structures and embedded in a complicated web of connections, events, and relationships (Rosenbaum 1977). Recognizing this, we broadened our inquiry to include a larger group of networks.

Using the descriptions of those networks, partnerships, and affiliates (individuals associated with NCREST [NCREST 1992]), we selected an additional sample. Most of the networks (1) had been in operation for at least five years (with one exception); (2) were organized in distinctly different ways; (3) linked different types of role groups; and (4) were geographically distributed.[1] These 14 networks and the 3 NCREST networks were:

- *Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network,* Vermont—secondary school English teachers and their students from six states who have joined together to improve the teaching of writing.
- *Center for Collaborative Education* (affiliated with the Coalition of Essential schools)—linkage of more than 30 schools in New York City.
- *Consortium for Educational Change*—a group of districts with National Education Association union leadership in suburban Illinois.
- *Diversity and Excellence Working for the Education of Youth (DEWEY) Network, NCREST*—eight suburban school districts working together to promote equity and excellence with diverse populations.
- *Four Seasons, NCREST*—a collaboration among three networks to build knowledge about how teachers learn, use, and shape authentic assessment.
- *Foxfire Teacher Outreach Network,* Rabun Gap, Georgia—a network that supports teachers who have adopted the Foxfire approach to teaching writing and literacy.
- *Harvard Principals' Center,* Cambridge, Massachusetts—a professional support network for principals in Boston committed to school improvement.

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[1] We interviewed the leaders of these networks by phone.

- *(Harvard) Teachers' Center,* Cambridge, Massachusetts—a group of teachers from Boston committed to their own professional growth and school improvement.
- *Institute for Literacy Studies—Elementary Teachers' Network*—elementary teachers in New York City who have joined together to promote effective literacy instruction focusing on the Primary Language Record.
- *International Network of Principals' Centers*—an international group that links the professional support networks serving school principals.
- *Mission Valley Consortium,* Montana—three districts linked to review, revise, and reform curriculum as a collaborative.
- *National Network for Educational Renewal,* Seattle, Washington—school/university partnerships linked to promote simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of educators.
- *Network of Progressive Educators*—a professional network for people nationwide who share the same values and beliefs about Progressive Education.
- *North Dakota Study Group,* University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota—a network of educators committed to the principles of Progressive Education.
- *Professional Development Schools Network,* NCREST—a network formed to support and build knowledge about professional development school partnerships between schools and universities.
- *Program for School Improvement—League of Professional Schools,* University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia—a network of more than 100 schools committed to democratic practice through shared decision making.
- *Southern Maine Partnership,* University of Southern Maine, Portland, Maine—linkage of districts moving toward restructuring schools and preparation of educators.

We observed five descriptive organizational themes woven into the fabric of all 17 networks, as well as five tensions that were a source of recurring negotiation. The organizational themes and tensions provided a frame to better understand the practices, structures, and cultures of these networks.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEMES OF NETWORKS

The organizational themes we observed were creating purposes and directions; building collaboration, consensus, and commitment; creating activities and relationships as building blocks; providing leadership through cross-cultural brokering, facilitating, and keeping the values visible; and dealing with the funding problem.

THEME ONE: CREATING PURPOSES AND DIRECTIONS

Central to the start-up of networks are the myriad ways organizers rally prospective participants to a particular cause, idea, or set of connections. As one network founder stated:

> You've got to have a compelling idea . . . a dust particle around which to coalesce. . . . But it must be compelling to the potential participants.

We found different patterns of development. Sometimes a summer workshop created a need to support teachers during the year (Foxfire and Bread Loaf). In the case of the National Network for Educational Renewal, a partnership between schools and universities created a purpose. Other times, a strong leader encouraged a group of followers to adopt a cause (League of Professional Schools and Harvard Principals' Center). Informal conversations also led to broader and deeper purposes (Southern Maine Partnership). The Center for Collaborative Education developed because a group of newly created alternative schools created a network for protection in a large bureaucratic system.

> The partnership started with conversations. In the beginning we had as many as 17 different groups. These conversations led to a linkage between teacher development and school development.

> We began in a rural school where the principal wanted to change. Another school heard about our discussions . . . then seven or eight other schools eventually came to a meeting and said, "Let's form a league" by looking at schools as democratic institutions.

While the reasons for the creation of each network depended on the particular contexts from which they emerged, their initial purposes strongly influenced the composition of their membership and their organizational form. (See Figure 10.1 for purposes, participants, and contexts.)

FIGURE 10.1

Participants, Purposes, and Contexts of Networks

Network	Participants	Purposes	Contexts
Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network	secondary school English teachers and their students	to ease the isolation of teachers in rural schools across the country	national - electronic
Center for Collaborative Education	New York City public schools; teachers and directors	to promote education reform and school restructuring based on the successful practices of its member schools	NYC affiliate Coalition of Essential Schools
Consortium for Educational Change	districts that, in conjunction with their NEA union leadership, commit to involvement—superintendents, school boards, union leaders, and, increasingly, community members	to build trust and collaboration between the teachers' union and district/school administrators	regional
Diversity and Excellence Working for the Education of Youth (DEWEY)	eight districts selected because of their increasingly diverse student populations; administrators, teachers, and university-based educators	to share and support practices that promote diversity and excellence	regional (Westchester and Rockland Counties in New York)
Four Seasons	teachers	to collaborate among three networks to build knowledge about how teachers learn, use, and shape authentic assessment	national - electronic
Foxfire Teacher Outreach Network	secondary school English teachers	to support individual teachers who have adopted the Foxfire approach to the teaching of writing and learning and to integrate that approach into the life of the school	national
Harvard Principals' Center	public school principals in the greater Boston area	to provide a professional support network for principals committed to school improvement	regional
(Harvard) Teachers' Center	teachers from the greater Boston area	to provide teachers committed to professional growth and to school improvement opportunities to learn and share with like-minded colleagues	regional
Institute for Literacy Studies—Elementary Teachers' Network	primarily elementary teachers	to promote effective literacy instruction using the Primary Language Record as the focus	regional (NYC)

FIGURE 10.1—*continued*

Participants, Purposes, and Contexts of Networks

Network	**Participants**	**Purposes**	**Contexts**
International Network of Principals' Centers	principals' centers, both nationally and internationally	to connect the professional support networks that serve school principals	international
Mission Valley Consortium	all members of the Mission Valley school community	to review and revise curriculum in participating districts and build a sense of shared ownership and commitment to curriculum reform	regional
National Network for Educational Renewal	school-university partnerships	to promote the simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of educators	national
Network of Progressive Educators	teachers, teacher educators, parents, public and private schools, child advocacy organizations	to provide a professional network for people who share the same values and beliefs about Progressive Education	national
North Dakota Study Group	educators committed to the principles of Progressive Education who have been invited to join	to bring together educators who are committed to Progressive Education, support democratic schools, and are interested in assessment	national
Professional Development Schools Network	professional development school partnerships, university and school-based educators	to share support and build knowledge about professional development schools (school-university partnership)	national
Program for School Improvement — League of Professional Schools	schools committed to shared governance, instructional initiatives, and action research	to help create schools that are driven by internal decisions based on the schools' own criteria for success—"democratic schools"	regional/national
Southern Maine Partnership	school districts	to help schools reflect on their own practice/move toward restructuring and help the university reflect on and restructure its preparation of educators (evolved over time)	regional

THEME TWO: BUILDING COLLABORATION, CONSENSUS, AND COMMITMENT

How people are brought together in a network affects the development of their relationships with one another and with the ideas that will form the basis of their work. Collaborative relationships build trust, which is essential to the exchange and development of ideas. Ideas build network members' interest and participation—ideas that are themselves transformed by the participants and fed back into the network (Schön 1977). In this expanding process, people become committed to one another as well as to larger ideas and ideals that expand their world and their work.

> For several years we met once a month over dinner. University professors would find an appropriate article, and the groups would eat dinner and discuss ideas. There was no attempt to prescribe anything. People would take the ideas and the format back to their school and create similar discussions.
>
> We were fortunate; we got a grant that sponsored teachers coming to a summer conference for nine years. But the teachers all said they were devastated by the antagonism they felt at the local level. That's how we started the electronic network.
>
> People came because they knew NCREST was a "bridge group," and the idea of a larger purpose grew because there was trust and people were unafraid to share their difficulties as well as their successes about their partnerships. We liked one another and looked forward to the meetings.

Regardless of how the networks evolved, the initial relationships involved meetings, conversations, or activities that created opportunities for people to gain information while receiving psychological support (Parker 1979). Whether the original purposes were broad or narrow, focused or only loosely defined, seemed of less importance than the fact that people came together, people who felt that what they were doing was worthwhile and productive. These networks, unlike conventional professional development efforts, build commitment by encouraging teachers and administrators to participate in shaping an agenda that is responsive to their questions, their learning, and their need for support as they tackle tough issues of teaching and learning.[2]

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[2] Some examples are assessment, how to create democratic schools, literacy and writing, dealing with diversity and excellence in changing communities, and integrating curriculum across the district.

THEME THREE: CREATING ACTIVITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS AS BUILDING BLOCKS

The activities sponsored by a network are designed to serve the collaborative's purposes, which include building relationships among participants. At the DEWEY Leadership Academy, members not only listened to outside experts, but presented their own work to peers and connected with participants from other districts who shared their problems and concerns. The summer workshops sponsored by the Four Seasons network offered presentations by experts, but also built the substance of the conference experience around work that the participants did together and, later, what the teachers did with their students. The Professional Development Schools Network based its collaboration on work done in problem-solving sessions attended by the representatives of its school/university partnerships. In these, as in other networks, educators come to expect that the problems of practice will be central to their discussions. As one leader commented:

> What the schools were seeing and hearing from one another was more powerful than any facilitation. It opened up worlds to people. There were things they never thought about and had never imagined.

Activities like these serve different levels of interrelated purposes. Speakers provide information and inspiration—conferring a sense of validation by an outside authority. But because the design of collaborative activities is driven by participants' needs and interests, they can also focus on the people's own particular problems by giving them alternative ways of thinking and acting. In this process, activities build identification with a larger group of colleagues and commitment to purposes beyond one's own classroom, school, or district. They support the sort of reciprocity that motivates members to contribute to larger ideals in the belief that it will benefit their individual work (Kadushin 1976).

But collaboration does not come easily. Networks derive their power and energy from offering members a voice in creating and sustaining an organization that values their professional identity and interests. Most educators, however, have spent their professional lives in schools that expect self-sufficiency in the classroom, but that encourage dependence on outside sources for expertise. The transformation may be difficult to achieve, but it is the presence of empowerment activities—opportunities for authentic problem solving, vigorous discussions of complex educational problems, and collaborating with others struggling in similar ways—that sets reform networks apart from conventional professional development activities.

Engaging educators in activities in which they learn to work interdependently, reflect on their practice, value their own expertise, assume leadership roles, and respond flexibly to unanticipated problems and opportunities is as central to the purposes of networks as it is to the processes of school reform. But who facilitates the changes in norms and expectations? How do the activities get organized? Who makes it all happen?

THEME FOUR: PROVIDING LEADERSHIP THROUGH CROSS-CULTURAL BROKERING, FACILITATING, AND KEEPING THE VALUES VISIBLE[3]

Leadership may be one of the least studied aspects of networks, coalitions, and partnerships, perhaps because it is important in ways that are sometimes not readily apparent to the network constituency. It is not only the subtle qualities of what leaders do, but what they encourage others to do. The functions of leadership include both backstage and on-stage work in the development of collaborative stances and activities that help stimulate and move the network forward.

Brokering, facilitating, and organizing are functions common to the leaders of the 16 networks. We discovered how layered the leadership role is and how tied it is to relationships, activities, and setting. As three network leaders observed:

> I really strive to operate democratically. The organization is never dependent on a single person. The leadership function is to articulate the values and help people work through how to express them . . .
>
> I'm a teacher! I see the network as a big class. I spend a lot of time with personal relationships, fighting to protect the emergent, reciprocal stance that has become the norm.

---

[3] Perhaps *leadership* is not the most appropriate word to use in describing networks, as it has so many connotations of formal roles and responsibilities. Rather it is the informal, facilitative, boundary-spanning, coordinating functions that are most important in these networks. Seeking talent and putting it to work, taking advantage of serendipitous happenings, and mixing and matching are the strengths of those who coordinate these networks.

> Leaders need to understand the relationship between communication and the development of professional identity. It is a struggle to make sense in common!

At times, facilitating networks is about making phone calls, raising money, establishing connections, forming groups, finding places to meet, and brokering resources and people. As five of our network leaders put it, however, it is also about

- "Providing a challenge, not a delivery of services."
- "Figuring out how to push people along and give them what they want at the same time."
- "Understanding the tension between the values of the network and the problems of the field."
- "Facilitating teachers' work outside, so that they can make changes inside."
- "Keeping the focus on the partnership way of doing work."

It is also about figuring out how to sustain these networks and help them develop and deepen their work while the education dollar continues to shrink.

THEME FIVE: DEALING WITH THE FUNDING PROBLEM

Of the 17 networks studied, 14 received significant or complete support from private or corporate foundations. The study affirmed that the struggle to find funding was an important part of their story. In some instances, the pursuit of funding actually helped to create the network because it encouraged prospective constituents to share available moneys more broadly by forming a network.

Foundation funding can, however, also produce great tensions for networks. Matthew Miles's admonition of nearly 20 years ago still stands: finding primary funding outside the collaboration can be fatal (Miles 1978, p. 33). Members of the Network of Progressive Educators struggled over the very name of their network, with many of them arguing that the word *progressive* would be unappealing to prospective funders. (It might indeed have contributed to the difficulty of getting funds.) In another instance, a funder felt entitled to exert a steady influence on the emphasis that a network placed on each of its multiple goals. Often, the need of many foundations for an assessment that documents outcomes can be at odds with the process-oriented work of networks. One network leader said:

> No one wants to pay the bill for a network. The problem is wired in. It's not clear to anyone who the beneficiaries of a network are and what the outcomes should be.

The dynamics inherent in this and other tensions seemed central to the process of how networks organize, build new structures, learn to collaborate, and develop a sense of community. While the resolutions to these tensions were heavily influenced by the context and character of each network—sometimes obscuring their similarities—the tensions themselves were common to all of them.

THE POWER AND FRAGILITY OF NETWORKS: NEGOTIATING THE TENSIONS

The tensions included negotiating between the purpose of the network and the dailiness of activities that constitute network "work"; dealing with the balance between "inside knowledge" and "outside knowledge"; creating a structure to resolve contradictions between centralization and decentralization; moving from informality and flexibility to more formal and rigid forms as the network grew; and making decisions about how inclusive or exclusive membership policy should be.

MEANINGFUL OR EMERGENT PURPOSE/COMPELLING ACTIVITIES

Initially networks attract participants who agree with their stated purposes, which in some cases may represent lofty ideals or long-standing aspirations. Examples of these are the National Network for Educational Renewal, which focuses on the simultaneous renewal of teacher education and the restructuring of schools, and the League of Professional Schools, which is dedicated to creating democratic schools.

Alternatively, compelling purposes can be driven by ideas that promise to transform classroom practice in specific ways. The Four Seasons Network focused on assessment, while the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network emphasized the writing process and literacy. Educators with shared philosophies often form networks. For example, the Network of Progressive Educators and the North Dakota Study Group are made of up of members committed to the principles of Progressive Education. Educators in the Center for Collaborative Education are bound together by a commitment to child-centered education.

No matter what the purpose of the network, activities have to be compelling enough to keep people coming back for more, no matter how meaningful the purposes of the network are. The tension that exists between purposes and activities occurs in both the long and the short term.

Consider this comment from a teacher in the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network:

> The six-week summer sessions provide something most teachers desperately desire and rarely get: time for personal reflection and adjustment. We study together, debate, exchange, challenge, grow, and experiment during that period face-to-face. Then we extend that experience throughout the regular school year.

In this case, the initial experience was clearly compelling. The work of creating an agenda during the year that keeps the involvement high and is connected to larger purposes becomes the network's problem.

Each of the networks we studied struggled with the tension between activities that successfully involved the participants (like the one noted earlier) and the necessity to link these activities to the larger purposes of the network—thereby giving the work greater meaning. When the balance between purposes and activities was achieved, each informed the other. Larger purposes gave meaning to activities that otherwise might have become an end in themselves, while the activities translated lofty ideals into the real work of school reform. In networks where purposes were emergent, the activities encouraged different kinds of discussions between cross-role groups or safe spaces for exploring ideas, which helped encourage the development of larger purposes.

INSIDE KNOWLEDGE/OUTSIDE KNOWLEDGE

Whatever the purpose, networks must take a stance on *what* and *whose* knowledge should inform the work of the network. This is particularly true for educational reform networks, as they are often trying to forge connections between communities and/or different role groups that hold different perspectives and have diverse ways of knowing, developing, and using knowledge (Lytle and Cochran-Smith 1992, Lieberman and McLaughlin 1992, Lieberman 1995b). The knowledge that teachers and principals develop in the context of their work is of a different order from the knowledge of university researchers or other outside experts.

Networks have to find ways to accommodate these different ways of knowing. If a network deals only with experiential or context-specific knowledge, it may deny knowledge that inspires new ideas, expands personal and professional vision, or helps teachers and administrators invent new techniques and processes for improving their practices. In the worst of situations, participants might "just be sharing ignorance." But simply reading and studying "outside" knowledge may fail to help participants make connections to the world of practice as they experience and live it in their particular contexts.

Although most networks try to embrace both inside and outside knowledge, no two networks appear to do it in the same way. The synthesis is affected by what the purposes are, how participants are involved with practical and conceptual ideas, and where the knowledge and ideas come from. As several different network leaders said:

> The agenda has to emerge from the work of the participants.
>
> The work must be driven by questions of practice.
>
> A few times we have sought out "experts," but this was only when we got started. Students and teachers have become their own experts.
>
> For a while the postulates focused the work, but the dilemma is when to push for further success on values or when to accept practical adaptation.

What sets networks apart from conventional professional development activities is that the content knowledge of school-based educators *and* outside knowledge are both recognized as important sources for agenda building. How and when these resources are used has to do with the purposes, the context, and the organizational arrangements of the network's central governing group and its participants. For example, the Southern Maine Partnership and the Consortium for Educational Change used outside knowledge—but in different ways—to build a constituency for change. While the Southern Maine Partnership started with participants reading articles for group discussion, the Consortium began with meetings that featured outside consultants. As they developed, however, both networks incorporated the problems and agendas of the participants, deepening and building on ideas brought in from the outside.

The League of Professional Schools used inside/outside knowledge in still a different way. While the underlying philosophy of the

League is to create schools as democracies, how that takes place is determined by individual school-based plans that work toward that goal. The role of the university is to prepare a research packet for the school *after* they have designed what they want to work on. Outside knowledge then informs the school's plans.

Teachers are ambivalent about the relationship between professional knowledge that they have developed over years of working in the classroom and the research knowledge of scholars and educational reformers. The major problem, from the teacher's perspective, is that experts have too often been brought in as part of someone else's agenda—perhaps to further the goals of the school board or of the administration—without involving teachers as legitimate partners with professional needs, knowledge, and understanding that might contribute significantly to the discussion.

Within the profession itself, teachers have not yet developed a tradition of sharing expertise among themselves. Networks play a major role, providing opportunities to validate both teacher knowledge and teacher inquiry. By organizing activities around shared work, networks recognize the classroom educator's experience, while broadening the base of that experience through collaboration. As teachers become more secure about what they know, they are more willing and able to pick and choose among resources beyond the classroom doors for what they need to know.

Centralization/Decentralization

While some networks are loose federations of people who come together for support, discussion, and mutual learning (for example, Network of Progressive Educators or Harvard Principals' Center), others create tighter structures and build norms of membership by working to internalize explicit goals (League of Professional Schools, National Network for Educational Renewal). Some form for specific—even local—purposes, subsequently broadening their agendas as the networks' roots take hold (for example, Bread Loaf, Foxfire, Harvard Principals' Center).

Each structural tendency suggests a complementary style of organization: centralized, decentralized, or what we might call "evolving." The forms are not always rigidly adhered to, however, because their effectiveness might be reduced. For example, a typical *district office* approach might be very efficient, but fail to involve members in shaping the work. A totally *grassroots* approach, on the other hand, might promote a committed membership but fail to link with other partners who have different perspectives, knowledge bases, or ways of working. An effective network organization creates ways to engage participants directly in issues of governance and leadership, while maintaining the flexibility to organize complex, and potentially far-reaching, operations. A few examples help clarify how it looks.

In the League of Professional Schools, every school's faculty elects a site committee. This committee writes a plan for its school's improvement—a critical document that both unites the faculty and gives the school a focus for its work. Schools are organized into regional chapters and are represented in a congress made up of chapters from all the regions. Leaders of the regional chapters are very active in making decisions. The role of the university is as a consultant to the site committees in defining their work. The university provides the structure, format, and research materials for the on-site faculty. While the problems of practice drive the network, and the university plays a facilitative role, the representative congress assures accountability and collaboration.

Starting from a series of conversations with different school groups, the Southern Maine Partnership (of the university and school districts) diffuses responsibilities across the partnership. The superintendents meet once a year and make policy decisions about direction for the year. The executive director, a professor, has served as a liaison to the field through her initial connections with the partnership districts. The partnership staff consists of a project manager, two partnership associates (teachers on leave from their district), a clerical person, and a part-time research director. In addition, five site coordinators link the districts to the partnership. The site coordinators and the executive director help maintain the collaborative focus by working together to create the forms, formats, and direction of the partnership.

To centralize shared decision making, the Consortium for Educational Change formed a steering committee of all teacher association presidents and superintendents of the 34 participating districts. To stay decentralized, the Harvard Principals' Center has, since its inception, held its meetings in rotating sites, farming out the work to its membership in a conscious effort not to build a central office.

Learning to collaborate is about sharing power, knowledge, and influence. When networks are getting started, the tension between centralization and decentralization is most intense. A university, for example, may begin a school collaboration with every intention of turning leadership over to participants at the first opportunity. In practice, however, a residual reluctance to let go, combined with the tendency of traditionally trained school personnel to look to the university for direction, may make it difficult to decentralize. As school-based educators call for more knowledge, many university network central offices respond by providing a variety of expert consultants. When authority, knowledge, and power are presumed to reside in the central office, diffusion of leadership and responsibility does not take place.

Mechanisms, roles, and structures that forge collaboration must be consciously designed to achieve greater decentralization. In addition to being aware of their own desires to retain control, network founders and facilitators encourage participation when they recognize that many teacher participants have not previously had the opportunity to take on professional leadership roles. Administrators who are accustomed to models of individual accountability rather than shared leadership may find that the transition to a collaborative organizational style can, at times, be confusing and frustrating. Ultimately, however, many members find that learning to collaborate with people who have different orientations to building knowledge is one of the most powerful experiences of participating in a network.

From Informality and Flexibility to Formality and Rigidity

Because networks are not tied to district specifications and particular inservice days, they are freer to create informal mechanisms that bring people together—for example, by serving food at meetings or by meeting over dinner. They can also set aside whole days for conferences or convene retreats in more isolated settings. Networks develop their own ways of communicating and meeting, depending on context and/or character, that become distinctive to their network "work." (The League of Professional Schools began by organizing a congress to represent its member schools, while the Southern Maine Partnership started with an activity they called "dine and discuss.")

The tension arises as the network matures. By trying to sustain the flexible forms of work that are the source of its strength, the network central office or leadership often try to institutionalize them. The energy, initiative, peer support, and trust developed informally is often threatened as the organization seeks ways to stabilize or expand (Miles 1978, p. 43). The more success networks experience, the more they reach out to other areas and the more pressure they feel to expand their bureaucracy as their numbers increase. A network leader describes the dilemma:

> Organizations kill themselves with by-laws. Networks should leave it loose and keep the flexibility to go with serendipitous moments.

Education networks bridge two cultures. On the one hand, they are connected to a system that organizes the delivery of education to school-age children through an elaborate system of codes, regulations, standards, and assessments. On the other hand, they support the professional development of teachers and administrators working within that system, who need to be free to step outside of it in order to consider ways to improve the very schools and system within which they work. One way networks provide this "step outside" is to bring people together in smaller, more informal, and personalized ways that invite participation. Teachers and principals count this opportunity—to work directly with colleagues who share their interests and their work—as one of the main reasons they are drawn to such networks.

Because they are addressing problems that they believe are "system deep" and nationwide, most networks implicitly or explicitly aspire to grow in membership and influence. To engage teachers in one district on the subject of restructuring schools is very positive. To include administrators, parents, students, community, and board members suggests the real possibility of change. A writing project that affects the students in several districts is powerful. One that spreads nationwide is that much better. Unfortunately, as noted earlier, the growth of an education reform network has the potential to threaten the informality and flexibility that makes it effective.

As the network expands, it moves beyond the core of "true believers" who helped shape its alternative culture, its "way." New recruits may find it more difficult to make the transition to professional development activities that are not run in the tidy, answer-oriented way to which they have become accustomed. In addition, sheer numbers challenge the intimacy and informality of the original network. The transition from an informal, flexible organizational culture to one that is more formal, more rigid, and less inviting is common to growing organizations. It is a critical issue for reform networks, however, because their institutional culture is central to who they are and what they do.

Sometimes network leaders tried to address this issue by decentralizing leadership, communication, organization, and activity planning. Even large gatherings were often built around opportunities for members to work face-to-face, rather than to listen side-by-side. Many spoke of the necessity of being vigilant about becoming too big or too bureaucratized, of becoming more like the system from which their members were drawn. The consensus was that, ideally, despite the pressures to expand, a network had to measure its success in the quality—not just the quantity—of its person-to-person connections and the integrity of the process of involving educators in their own learning.

INCLUSIVITY/EXCLUSIVITY OF MEMBERSHIP

At different times in a network's life, criteria are established for membership that are explicitly or implicitly shaped by the network's purposes. Is the central purpose of a network to bring together like-minded people who will expand one another's knowledge? Such a group might restrict membership to educators who already share a particular perspective. Is it to provide a way of talking across districts to share resources and improve schools? In such a network, efforts would be made to enlist the broadest possible base of participation. Should anyone who wants to join be allowed to? In a network intended to induct the uninitiated into new ways of thinking about education and new ways of working, membership is actively recruited. All networks have to determine who to include in their membership and how expansive to be about recruiting new members.

The DEWEY Network, which is committed to systemwide change, has limited itself to eight school districts. In the Southern Maine Partnership, the personnel of any district in the region may attend the variety of activities available by paying a nominal yearly fee. Some districts attend meetings and participate in the network for several years without making any changes in practice at the school level; the network is intended to be open and welcoming without demanding accountability. Partnership members themselves, however, hold strong norms about how they work together and, informally, there is a "partnership way of doing things."

Different from the open stance of Southern Maine, the League of Professional Schools admits only schools that commit at the outset to develop their own plans for working toward democratic schools. They must agree not only to do the work themselves, but subsequently to share their work with others. Similarly, the National Network for Educational Renewal has a membership based on school-university partnerships that commit to the network's postulates for renewal.

Each network must decide how, when, or if they will bring in new members. These decisions lead to the issue of how to socialize new members into the network. Some networks provide specific activities for new members (League of Professional Schools, Bread Loaf) that help to define membership, while others provide activities that are always open to new members (Southern Maine Partnership, Consortium for Educational Change). Regional networks often reach a point where size becomes a problem; sometimes instead of growing larger, they encourage the formation of new networks who share their vision and purpose, thereby gaining new organizational partners.[4]

Networks face a Hobson's choice when they decide whether or not to restrict membership. Members who have already committed to the organization's purposes or take a course on its fundamental precepts can usually be counted upon to support the work of the network enthusiastically. They may go forth as pioneers and, with the support of the network, make great strides in reforming their own practice. When an entire school joins a network, that change goes beyond the individual classroom and may restructure much of what happens educationally in that building. In most cases, however, the reform tends to remain with those invested members who qualified to join the network in the first place.

For networks with a more open approach to membership, the issues are quite different. While there is the potential to include and convert a much broader membership, open enrollment networks must struggle to create the investment in purpose that more exclusive networks can often take for granted. When open networks try to establish themselves across a whole district, they tackle even more complex issues. They have to find ways to interest and attract members who perform different roles and functions, members who are struggling to make sense of the purposes of the network, while trying to form new kinds of working relationships with colleagues who are on different rungs of the school system hierarchy.

WHAT MAKES NETWORKS SPECIAL FOR SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATORS?

Although each educational reform network is unique, growing out of the specifics of its context, purpose, and participants, networks all have to deal with similar organizational themes and tensions in their formation, development, and sustenance (Miles 1978, Rosenbaum 1977, Goodlad 1977, Parker 1977, Peterson 1977). It is most important to understand that, while they have all the problems of formal organizations, they must, in addition, find ways to keep the commitment, energy, and participation of their membership. Where formal organizations *should* do this, networks *must* do it to stay alive. Despite these problems, however, successful networks have powerful effects on their members. Why is this so?

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[4] This happened in Southern Maine. A group of districts created a new network in Northern Maine learning from their Southern partners.

First, teachers and administrators have opportunities to label, articulate, and share the tacit knowledge that they have developed through their work. This has the effect of dignifying and giving shape to the substance of what school-based educators share: the dailiness of work that, while often invisible to outsiders, binds insiders together.

Second, networks have the flexibility to organize activities first, letting the structures needed to support those activities follow, instead of the other way around. This kind of responsiveness provides for a more developmental approach to participant learning, empowers network members to voice their approval or disapproval, and encourages a more personal and professional connection to their own learning.

Third, networks shift the meaning of adult learning away from prescription, toward challenging involvement and problem solving. To do this, they model different modes of inquiry: supporting the formation of teams or task forces; finding mechanisms to encourage cross-role group discussions; focusing deeply on tough, seemingly intractable issues; and inviting participants to help shape the agenda in their own terms.

Fourth, although networks have coordinators, members have numerous opportunities to take on formal leadership roles as site coordinators, regional directors, and partnership associates, or to assume informal roles as teacher scholars, proposal writers, meeting facilitators, and experts in newly acquired knowledge. These roles strengthen the commitment of members to the network and enlarge the scope of their personal and professional associations.

Fifth, networks provide numerous examples of collaboration among their members. Schools, as they are currently organized, do not encourage collaboration; networks expect participants to work together. Indeed, expectations and opportunities may be the reason many of these networks become so compelling to their members (McLaughlin and Talbert 1993). They provide authentic examples of professional community built around shared work, shared interests, and shared struggles. Such communities legitimate a search for alternative solutions to complex educational problems that have no simple or universally agreed-upon answers (Little 1993, Lieberman 1995b, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin 1995).

Sixth, when networks, coalitions, and partnerships last long enough to create continuing learning communities, cultures based on mutual knowledge building, learning, and collaboration replace the transmission of knowledge from one institution to another. These cultures, focused on critical issues of school reform, place educational practice at the center—providing the kind of social and professional nourishment that leads members to invest time, effort, and commitment far beyond what they give to typical professional development opportunities.

Networks that link two cultures (school and university, union and school districts, teachers and administrators, or schools with one another and other service providers) encourage their members to participate in one another's growth and development. They also foster greater egalitarian arrangements, which allow all members to define themselves in individual ways, to try on new roles, and to practice them in safe surroundings.

A NEW LOOK FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our look across networks helps us to understand their strong contextual nature, their infinite variety of purpose and character, and their similar organizational tensions. Regardless of their individual differences, they appear to have in common the ways in which they bring people together and organize their work: agendas that are more often challenging than prescriptive; learning that is more indirect than direct; formats for work more collaborative than individualistic; attempts at change more integrated than fragmented; approaches to leadership more facilitative than directive; thinking that is more multiperspective than uniperspective; an appreciation for both context-specific knowledge and generalized knowledge; and structures and philosophies that are more movement-like than organization-like. At a time when schools are reinventing themselves to serve a changing society, these problematic yet powerful borderless organizations are becoming an important force for reform in American education.

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11

Emotion and Hope: Constructive Concepts for Complex Times

MICHAEL FULLAN

> Pessimism is a very easy way out when you're considering what life really is because pessimism is a short view of life. If you look at what is happening around us today and what has happened since you were born, you can't help but feel that life is a terrible complexity of problems and elusiveness of one sort or another. . . . It is very much easier to be tragic than it is to be comic. I have known people to embrace the tragic view of life, and it is a cop-out. They simply feel rotten about everything, and that is terribly easy.
>
> —*Roberston Davies, Canadian novelist*
>
> (In Csikszentmihalyi 1996)

It is easy to be pessimistic about educational reform. There are many legitimate reasons to be discouraged. From a rational-technical point of view, the conclusion that large-scale reform is a hopeless proposition seems justified. Like Andy Hargreaves, in the opening chapter

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of this Yearbook, I argue in this chapter that the emotional side of change has been either ignored or miscast. By examining emotions and change from a different perspective, we not only gain insights about the dynamics of change, but we also find new understandings of how to make change work more constructively. The moral and the technical begin to fuse, instead of being two ships passing in the night.

I start with a brief summary of the seemingly intractable problems of change—which could easily lead one to give up. I then rebuild the argument on a different premise starting first with the individual, and then moving to the group and the organization—a premise in which emotion and hope play a prominent but not Pollyannaish role. Wishful thinking or blind hopefulness are no more useful than cynicism.

Technical planning has not worked in educational change. Political pressure has failed to make a difference. Because moral exhortation falls short, is there a way of going deeper that leads to motivating and mobilizing even the most discouraged? I think there is. The question is whether in rethinking the place of emotion and hope in change, we can actually come up with a more effective route to working with complex change.

After examining emotion and hope at the individual and group levels, I turn to their implications for understanding and acting on constructive educational change. I will attempt to demonstrate that the more basic concepts of emotion and hope in human affairs provide a more profound explanation of why educational reform works when (in the small number of cases) it does. These deeper understandings, I will argue, are absolutely essential for sustaining and spreading constructive change.

THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Among the fundamental problems of educational change are (1) the growing and deepening alienation among teachers; (2) the balkanization and burnout of passionate reform-minded teachers; and (3) the overwhelming multiplicity of unconnected, fragmented change initiatives.

Anyone who spends time in public schools can feel the growing and deepening malaise among educators, whether it stems from a sense on the part of teachers that the public and the government do not care about them, or from an overwhelming sense of despair that the problems are insurmountable and worsening. Ken Dryden spent all year in Kennedy Secondary School outside metro Toronto observing in classrooms and talking with teachers and students. Dryden (1995) writes this about a history teacher:

> Rick learned a great lesson in humility. . . . He has a teacher's need to help kids. . . . He has the urge to personalize every kid's success and failure, feel the highs, suffer the lows, but by now he knows he is no savior. So much is going on in each kid's life, every story is so complicated. He is just one small brush stroke on a large canvas (p. 84).

No matter how hard they tried, says Dryden, teachers could not get past the "front row," reaching only a small percentage of the kids.

On the opposite side of the world, Bishop and Mulford (1996) subtitle their article on empowerment in four Australian schools "They Don't Really Care." Teachers talked about the impersonal government as the "they" out there:

> They don't really care. It's purely a numbers and monetary game. I wouldn't mind so much if there was a purpose or master plan. Pressure and stress are up, and I'm not convinced that the government has the best interests of the kids at heart.

For large numbers of the teaching profession, the pressure of the job has taken the joy out of teaching.

At the same time, a significant minority of teachers has been attracted to specific reform initiatives and networks. There is less documentation on the effects of these heroic efforts, but the signs are not encouraging. Robert Fried (1995)—another author close to front-line teachers—concludes that "passionate teachers" are becoming exhausted in the face of "apathy and resistance" (from other teachers as well as from elsewhere). District Superintendent in New York City, Anthony Alvarado, reflects on his experience in District 2:

> My strategy there was to make it possible for gifted and energetic people to create schools that represented their best ideas about teaching and learning and to let parents choose the schools that best matched their children's interest. We generated a lot of interest and a lot of good programs. But the main flaw with that strategy was that it never reached every teacher in every classroom; it focused on those who showed energy and commitment to change. So, after a while, improvement slowed down as we ran out of energetic and committed people. Many of the programs became inward-looking instead of trying to find new ways to do things (Elmore and Burney 1996, p. 14).

Elmore (1995) discusses the fatal in-built self-defeating nature of going only with the flow of like-minded reformers:

> The first step serious reformers typically take involves gathering up the faithful and concentrating them in one place in order to form a cohesive community of like-minded practitioners. In the case of the progressives, reformers started schools that embodied their ideas; in the case of the curriculum projects, reformers identified early adopters of their new curricula as exemplars of success. This strategy immediately isolates the teachers who are most likely to change from those who are least likely to embrace reform. This dynamic creates a social barrier between the two, virtually guaranteeing that the former will not grow in number and the latter will continue to believe that exemplary teaching requires extraordinary resources in an exceptional environment (p. 17).

As satisfying and romantic as this might be in the short view, balkanized reformers eventually burnout leaving behind more cynicism and even greater gaps between "reformers and resisters." The inevitable long-run result of such a strategy is ironically to reduce the number of teachers committed to reform.

A third counterproductive problem, which appears in the guise of reform, is the presence of a multiplicity of change initiatives that actually make matters worse. Bryk and his colleagues (1993) put it this way:

> A natural concomitant to the multiplicity of the programs, however, is that they are often uncoordinated and may even be counterproductive in terms of student learning. The addition of new programs on top of the old ones may result in a disjointed and fragmented set of experiences for students. . . . Much of school life seems to follow an endless cycle of soliciting funds, implementing new initiatives, and then going out to solicit more funds for even newer initiatives to replace current ones (p. 26).

Similarly, the increased intrusive scrutiny of the performance of schools and teachers is leaving many teachers emotionally drained, with feelings of confusion, anxiety, and professional inadequacy (Jeffrey and Woods, in press). What is a teacher to do? It feels right to be alienated. It seems hopeless to engage in the moral martyrdom of undertaking exhausting reforms against the grain. And the presence of a continuous stream of superficial, unconnected innovations justifies the conclusion that the system does not know what it is doing either.

In short, current strategies—top-down, bottom-up, or sideways—don't work. We need to step back from this conundrum and approach it differently, more basically, and as usual in postmodern times more paradoxically.

EMOTION AND HOPE: THE INDIVIDUAL

What do you do when you are faced with a lost cause that is of great importance? Richard Farson (1996), in *Management of the Absurd*, provides a novel entry point in recalling a line from one of Frank Capra's movies from the thirties, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. James Stewart, who plays a young man just elected to the Senate, receives the absurd advice from his father that "lost causes are the only ones worth fighting for."

The state of educational reform is a prime candidate for the lost-cause category because none of the current strategies being employed results in substantial, widespread change. The first step toward liberation, in my view, is the realization that we are facing a lost cause. Paradoxically, as we shall see, this stance offers the only hope of making sustained progress. Moreover, the logic and the emotion of it makes perfect sense.

We all know smart people who do dumb things (Feinberg and Tarrant 1995), and that many people of modest intelligence are quite successful. The difference, Goleman (1995) argues, is the degree to which an individual possesses *emotional intelligence*, which includes "self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself" (p. xii). Self-control and empathy, says Goleman, are at the heart of emotional intelligence. Moreover, Damasio (1994) presents compelling evidence that emotions are indispensable for rational decisions because they inform and narrow the range of choices in solving problems and making decisions. Cognitive intelligence is an advantage, but it is especially so when it combines with emotional maturity. The combination of heart and head is crucial to effectiveness.

Given the complexity and chaotic conditions of postmodern life, emotional development is crucial to survival:

> Much evidence testifies that people who are emotionally adept—who know and manage their own feelings well, and who read and deal effectively with other people's feelings—are at an advantage in any domain of life, whether romance and intimate relationships or picking up the unspoken rules that govern success in organizational politics. People with well-developed emotional skills are also more likely to be content and effective in their lives, mastering the habits of mind that foster their own productivity; people who can-

> not marshal some control over their emotional life fight inner battles that sabotage their ability for focused work and clear thought (Goleman 1995, p. 36).

Remember the metaphorical lost cause, or Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) observation that "frustration is deeply woven into the fabric of life" (p. 7). This is the lot of teachers. The more they care, the more anxious they get. The more that they become emotionally detached, the poorer the decisions they make. Understanding the intimate two-way link between emotion and hope is a powerful insight. Hope is not a naive, sunny view of life. It is the capacity not to panic in tight situations, to find ways and resources to address difficult problems:

> From the perspective of emotional intelligence, having hope means that one will not give in to overwhelming anxiety. . . . Indeed, people who are hopeful evidence less depression than others as they maneuver through life in pursuit of their goals, are less anxious in general, and have fewer emotional distresses (Goleman 1995, p. 87).

It is well known that prolonged stress is unhealthy—deeply physiologically unhealthy because it undermines the immune system. We think less explicitly that hope or optimism (especially combined with other conditions described in the next section) can lead to better health. People who are optimistic and hopeful *are* more resourceful and do better under difficult circumstances (Goleman 1995, p. 177). Not only do they avoid the costs of perennial pessimism, but they *gain* the benefits of hopefulness. It is important to emphasize that I am linking hope and purpose. Hopeful people are not unaware of reality or superficially happier. They are indeed hopeful in the face of lost causes and other intractable problems.

It would be easy to draw misleading conclusions from this description. Be happy, refuse to worry, if only more of us could be hopeful things would be all right. I am instead saying that the situation of change is profoundly problematic and that we are down to our last virtue: hope. We stand less of a chance by pursuing the techniques of innovation than we do by working on a deeper understanding of the complex interrelationships of emotion, hope, empathy, and moral purpose.

Let me take two more down-to-earth applications of this line of thought. Both are from the perspective of the individual—one as initiator of change, the other as recipient.

Why does Mintzberg (1994) say, "Never adopt a [management] technique by its usual name" (p. 27), and Farson (1996) state, "Once you find a management technique that works, give it up" (p. 35). Because there is no silver bullet, no shortcut to reform, and because techniques devalue and disrespect emotions. The initiators of change must learn to put techniques in their place—they are at best tools in the service of a more fundamental set of relationships.

For example, assume you are a principal who is strongly committed to the increased use of technology. You are sincerely convinced that it is in the best interest of students to become technologically proficient. You see yourself as an innovator and change agent. In the old way of thinking—strategically and technically grounded—you might approach the situation along these lines:

> I am sure that technology is one of the keys to the future for my students. Parents support it. I know that some teachers favor it, but others are going to be Luddites. How can I get some teacher leaders to support it? What kind of external resources and expertise can I generate to provide support and pressure to move forward? Maybe I can secure a few transfers and new appointments. My whole approach is advocacy and co-optation into an agenda that I am sure is right.

Now, let us assume that you, as principal, are schooled in the deeper insights about complex change. You are equally convinced that technology is critical, but you approach it differently. Cutting the story short, let's say that you are having a staff session in which you are about to show a video segment that portrays a highly successful technology-based school in action. Instead of showing it to make your case, you present it differently. You randomly ask one half of the staff to view the video with a "positive lens" noting what might be in it for them; you ask the other half of the staff to view it "negatively or critically" by identifying what might be problematic or potentially negative for them. If you are sincere, you have legitimized dissent. You have made it easy for staff to speak up about concerns (which would come out later anyway in more subtle and inaccessible ways). You listen carefully, suspending your own advocacy, because you know that some fundamental problems will be identified and that people's fears, real or imagined, will need to be examined carefully. This information may lead you to go back to the drawing board, to work with staff to address some preconditions, to proceed into action on a start small/think big basis, or to abandon high-profile technology in favor of a different approach.

In other words, with greater emotional intelligence and empathy, initiators of change learn from resisters. They know that emotion is energy. They know that

> what is needed is to hear the discontent, not to judge it or deny it, but accept that it is what others perceive. The simple act of listening, of seeking to understand the nature of the discontent, is enough to begin to shift staff's perception. However, many managements refuse to listen because they fear the dissatisfaction is worse than it is or they do not see it as balanced by many positive views of the organization. Once they take the risk of listening they are often surprised by the good news which arrives along with the bad (Binney and Williams 1995, p. 104).

In essence I am saying that the role of enthusiasts has been overestimated, and the value of resisters has been missed. Enthusiasts can be helpful to be sure, but not if in the mid to long run they increase the gap between themselves as small isolated groups of reformers and the larger numbers of organizational members; and not if they turn out to be wrong because their ideas have not been subjected to critical scrutiny by nay-sayers who have a different point of view. The value of resisters, on the other hand, has been unappreciated. Resistant acts "often embody a form of good sense" (Gitlin and Margonis 1995).

Trying to manipulate or otherwise control the change process in order to minimize or eliminate resistance is not only futile, but it is exhausting:

> A more successful process is "listening to those who seem to be resisters and seeking to understand what lies behind their resistance" (Binney and Williams 1995, pp. 111-112).

Finding a way to reconcile positive and negative emotion is the key to releasing energy for change. The initiator or leader of change who combines hope and empathy, even in the face of seemingly lost causes, has a much greater chance for breakthrough.

It is important to clarify, as is implicit in the above example, that hope is not connected only to "positive" emotion (see the opening chapter by Andy Hargreaves). Indeed, the opposite is the point in dealing with lost causes. Anger, sadness, frustration, anxiety, loss of control, dissatisfaction, discomfort—all inform hopefulness for the emotionally intelligent person. Because the emotionally effective person knows that complexity and diversity is endemic in postmodern society, and always brings disagreement and frustration, he or she approaches the problem with that basic assumption. This is what Patrick Dolan (1994) was getting at when he observed:

> In a school, where mistrust between the community and the administration is the major issue, you might begin to deal with it by making sure that parents were present at every major event, every meeting, every challenge. *Within the discomfort of that presence*, the learning and the healing could begin (p. 60, my emphasis).

Hopeful people have a greater capacity to deal with interpersonal discomfort, and believe they will get somewhere by staying with it. They know that despair, while sometimes justified, is ultimately self-destructive.

Perhaps it is one thing to have hope and empathy if you are in a leadership position, but what if you are the recipient of changes around you. (In fact, for the vast majority of changes we experience regardless of our station in life, we are recipients much more often than innovators of change.) The secret again is the stance toward life. If we try to implement all changes coming our way, we are naive and find ourselves in a state of constant overload and dependency. If we reject all changes because they are incoherent, we become victimized anyway.

The more effective orientation, which builds on what I have been saying so far, is captured by Howard Gardner (1995) in his incisive study of 11 *Leading Minds*. He summarizes some of the traits in his composite Exemplary Leader (E.L.):

> Among the markers of the leader's personality, the most telling indication is a willingness to confront individuals in authority. Sometimes this confrontation is abrasive, but it need not be so. Rather, E.L. stands out in that she identifies with and feels herself to be a peer of an individual in a position of authority. To E.L. it therefore feels natural—or at least possible—to address that person directly. Moreover, E.L. has pondered the issues involved in a specific position of leadership and believes that her own insights are at least as well motivated and perhaps more likely to be effective than those of the person currently at the helm. Perhaps this feeling of confidence stems from the fact that E.L.'s proposed solutions to problems grow out of her own life circumstances and thus are more appropriate than solutions conceived in earlier times or in other places (p. 286).

Gardner proceeds to identify other traits: "E.L. stands out because of her concerns with moral issues" (p. 286); "another feature is the opportunity for reflection" and "the major reason that reflection is important is that a leader like E.L. must be able to see the big picture" (p. 287).

Similarly, Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) study of 91 creative individuals from different fields indicates that creative people do not accept at face value what comes at them:

> [They] do not rush to define the nature of problems; they look at the situation from various angles first and leave the formulation undetermined for a long time. They consider different causes and reasons. They test their hunches about what really is going on, first in their own mind and then in reality. They try tentative solutions and check their success—and they are open to reformulating the problem if the evidence suggests they started out on the wrong path (p. 365).

Farson (1996), echoing Gardner's "willingness to confront others in authority," says that

> both in school and at home we are taught a reliance on authority, on the opinion of others. We are taught not to trust our emotions, that our emotions are our enemies and will get us into trouble (p. 150).

The same point, made more powerfully by Binney and Williams (1995), is that

> intuition is important. Often people know what to do but can't articulate why. They have an instinct, a feeling that they ought to do something or behave in a certain way. So also with change. In our experience managers have a great deal of instinct and intuition about what works and what doesn't. If they feel it is OK to discuss openly what their instincts tell them, there is a huge well of insights to be drawn from (p. 49).

Suppressing intuition and emotion is a barrier to good judgment, and we need to give them both more space in dealing with complex change circumstances.

Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and others make it clear that the main purpose of their work is not to identify rarefied individuals, but to provide insights about leadership for everyone. Leadership with a small "l" has to do with how we all can exert greater control in the complexities of everyday experiences. The most important message is "how to find purpose and enjoyment in the chaos of existence" (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p. 20). The answer must start with us as individuals. Being hopeful is a powerful resource in its own right, and it can be amplified tremendously in the group.

EMOTION AND HOPE: THE GROUP

We know at a common sense and experiential level that relationships matter a great deal, especially during times of intense change. We write about collaborative work attitudes and professional learning communities, but it is too easy for these to become abstract phrases. Once again, I believe that if we dig deeper into roles of emotion and hope in interpersonal relationships, we will gain a lasting understanding of how to deal with change more constructively.

Goleman (1995) provides a basic starting point:

> Studies done over two decades involving more than 37,000 people show that social isolation—the sense that you have nobody with whom you can share your private feelings, have close contact—doubles the chances of sickness or death (p. 178).

If we link these findings to the iron law of change—that all change produces fear of the unknown, ambivalence, and anxiety—we begin to see what has to be done. Helping ourselves and other people better manage the upsetting feelings of change is the healthiest thing we can do.

Farson (1996) states it this way:

> My experience tells me that people suffer most in their lives from failed or failing relationships—parental rejections, marital strife, difficulties with bosses—or from the lack of relationships—isolation, alienation, erosion of community. It follows, then, that the best way to deal with individuals may be to improve relationships (p. 91).

Along with moving to site-based management, rethinking staff development, assessment systems, and the like, the best way to deal with change may be "to improve relationships." Because techniques abound (and they don't work), because we have failed to work at the basics—human relationships—and because you cannot really "manage" relationships, many of us have concluded that managing change in a direct sense is a myth (see Binney and Williams 1995, Farson 1996, Stacey 1993). Paradoxically, to know that relationships cannot be managed directly frees us to pursue other approaches that create more powerful situations for dealing with the vicissitudes of complex change.

Change is learning, done under conditions of many real and perceived unknowns. In these circumstances prolonged isolation is bad, and interaction is essential. Binney and Williams (1995) observe that "if people work extensively in isolation, from their colleagues or the external environment, there is a greater probability that they will find change more difficult to adjust to" because they will be less aware of what is going on inside and outside the organization (p. 125). They will be more unprepared for change. Interaction, on the other hand, is vital: "It is as a result of interaction that things can be seen differently, choices appear, and action is supported" (p. 145). To interact effectively requires individuals "who know and manage their own feelings well, and who read and deal effectively with other people's feelings" (Goleman 1995, p. 36).

In the same way that crash diets don't work, we must abandon the search for the quick fix. There is a consistent message in the new books on change:

- Have good ideas, but listen with empathy.
- Create time and mechanisms for personal and group reflection.
- Allow intuition and emotion a respected role.
- Work on improving relationships.
- Realize that hope, especially in the face of frustrations, is the last healthy virtue.

CONSTRUCTIVE EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

It is no accident that I have drawn very little up to this point on the educational change literature. I wanted to establish the basic human concepts of emotion and hope as a foundation for a deeper understanding of constructive educational change. I maintain, in this section, that such a perspective provides us with a more powerful, lasting, and action-generative basis for interpreting recent research on constructive change.

Despite the consistency and specificity of research findings on the impact of collaborative work cultures and professional learning communities, we do not seem to be gaining ground on educational reform. Understanding these successes as charged with emotion and hope infuses them with more meaning, and may make them more memorable and attractive. Let us first consider briefly the essence of these findings.

Newmann and Wehlage (1995) provide a concise summary of their studies of "successful school restructuring" in more than 1,500 schools. They define success as school reform efforts that make a positive difference in student learning and performance, measured both by newer standards of performance as well as by traditional achievement tests. Successful schools focused on "authentic" pedagogy (teaching that requires students to think, to develop an in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important realistic problems), and student learning. They achieved this in two main ways:

> *1. Greater Organizational Capacity*
> The most successful schools were those that used restructuring tools to help them function as professional communities. That is, they found a way to channel staff and student efforts toward a clear, commonly shared purpose for student learning (Newmann and Wehlage 1995, p. 3).
>
> *2. Greater External Support*
> We found that external agencies helped schools to focus on student learning and to enhance organizational capacity through three strategies: setting standards for learning of high intellectual quality; providing sustained, schoolwide staff development; and using deregulation to increase school autonomy (p. 4).

In short, vibrant internal learning communities dynamically plugged into two-way relationships with external networks made the difference. Corroborating evidence on the critical combination of internal and external learning is mounting (see, for example, Elmore and Burney 1996, Louis and Kruse 1995, and Spillane and Thompson 1996).

However, it takes a careful, I would say deeper, reading of these studies to grasp their full meaning. Collaborative work of the kind described in these studies embodies socioemotional support as well as technical assistance. It creates a culture, as Joe MacDonald (in press) observes, of "lateral accountability," which "puts more peer pressure and accountability on staff who may not have carried out their fair share, but it can also ease the burden on teachers who have worked hard in isolation but who felt unable to help some students" (Newmann and Wehlage 1995, p. 31).

These studies show the folly of searching for quick managerial fixes. Elmore and Burney (1996) talk about Superintendent Anthony Alvarado's approach in District 2 in New York City:

> Alvarado worries that District 2's approach to instructional improvement will be seen by outsiders as a collection of management principles, rather than as a culture based on norms of commitment, mutual care, and concern. Implementing the principles without the culture, he argues, will not work, because management alone cannot affect people's deeply held values (p. 22).

The strategies used in District 2 consist of a highly interactive and interpersonal network of learning and assessing progress.

Griffin's (1996) study of teachers in 13 restructuring schools also describes the personal and interpersonal nature of emotion and hope at work. The teachers in Griffin's research were characterized by

- A sense of obligation/urgency: "This urgency is rooted in the teachers' belief that schools can make a difference in students' lives, present and future, and that this belief must be played out against the complex tapestry of the larger society" (p. 3).
- An eagerness to recognize and act upon the "problems" they encountered.
- Retreat from beliefs that others can solve one's personal/professional problems.
- A decision to redesign their use of time to understand, decide, act, reflect together.
- A greater sense of future possibility.
- A concern for everyday life and the school's relation to it.
- A commitment and understanding of the interdependence of people, events, ideas, and agencies (Griffin 1996).

In their investigation of "local capacity" to implement mathematics and science reforms in nine school districts, Spillane and Thompson (1996) found that on the surface all nine districts appeared to be aligning their curriculum with state policy, but on closer examination only three were engaged in substantive reform. The now familiar list of differences in these three districts included different conceptions and use of time, staffing, materials, knowledge, commitment and disposition, professional networks, and trust and collaboration. In turn, Spillane and Thompson organize these characteristics into three main categories:

1. Physical capital (material resources).
2. Human capital (commitment to reform and disposition to learn by administrators and teacher leaders).
3. Social capital (relationships and networks internal and external to the district).

Once again we see the centrality of individual motivation and social relationships.

We are now in a position to be more explicit about the main argument that connects emotion and hope to sustained reform in a way that provides a deeper explanation and a more powerful reform agenda. First, in many respects, the experience of teachers with reform is generating deep negative emotions and a sense of hopelessness, either because they are on the defensive from external attack or because they have been part of small groups of reformers who have burned themselves out. What makes this situation so serious is that it is so fundamentally flawed and self-defeating.

Second, the first step toward liberation is the recognition, on the one hand, that persistent negative emotions lead to ever greater individual and organizational illness and diminution of capacity and, on the other hand, that being hopeful is a critical resource, especially in the face of seeming lost causes. This realization contains a powerful insight for breaking free of a vicious cycle of despair.

Third, the research findings of successful reform just reviewed should be understood as providing, at least temporarily, the very conditions that enable hope to be experienced—again in the face of daunting problems.

The point is not that these conditions represent the elusive solutions that we have been seeking, but rather that hope is to be especially prized when it is fragile. Put another way, it is easy to be hopeful when things are rosy; it is essential to be hopeful when they are not. Holding onto hope in difficult situations is a necessary (although not a sufficient condition for longer term survival).

Fourth, reformers are ill-advised to work only within the balkanized cocoons of like-minded individuals. We stand more of a chance of getting somewhere if we confront differences earlier in the process, working through the discomfort of diversity, than we do if we attempt to work in sealed-off cultures.

Fifth, and this is crucial, to stay hopeful under negative conditions is not to be politically quiescent. It is not only possible, but indeed essential, to work on the connection between hopefulness and the structural conditions that promote it. The hopeful change agent that I am talking about is painfully aware that the current working conditions of teachers work against reform. The development of collaborative work cultures under very different internal structural conditions (more grouping of students, and teachers; more time for teachers to work together; close collaboration with parents and communities; redistribution of resources) and very different external relationships (standards of performance and accountability, access to networks of ideas and professional learning) must become part and parcel of the working agenda of hopeful reformers. This stance includes pushing for, demanding, and expecting new policy frameworks to alter the incentives and structural conditions that currently frustrate reform.

In short, hope has a dual interconnected track in which reformers work with students, parents, and other educators, even when it seems like a lost cause, and participate in the politics of altering the structural conditions of schools so that reform and quality have a greater chance of being built into the daily experiences of the majority of educators and students.

EMOTION, HOPE, AND POSITIVE CHANGE

Society is more complex, more chaotic, more nonlinear than ever before. The demands on schools are ever more multiple and fragmented. The boundaries between schools, their communities, and society are more permeable (see Hargreaves and Fullan, in press, and the chapters in this Yearbook, especially those by David Elkind [Chapter 3], Jeannie Oakes and her colleagues [Chapter 2], and Andy Hargreaves [Chapter 1]).

To survive in these circumstances requires a greater individual and group capacity. This capacity at its core is to be able to handle emotions and hope differently. Frustration, disagreement, intractable problems are common fare. Working together under these circumstances takes on radically different meaning and urgency. It's not a matter of having trusting relationships with like-minded people. As Elmore (1995) puts it, "Small groups of self-selected reformers apparently seldom influence their peers" (p. 20). If we are to get anywhere on a larger scale, we have to take on the "negative" emotions. Hope is not blind. It recognizes that disagreement and matters of power are central to working through the discomfort of diversity (see also Henry 1996).

The successful school restructuring efforts described earlier may not be enduring and may not spread (and that indeed is the problem). The argument in this chapter is that we have a greater chance of capitalizing on these findings if we understand the roles of emotion and hope that underlie successful individuals and groups, and if we strive to create the structural conditions that challenge and help create hopefulness. I contend that these successes occurred precisely because emotion and hope were channeled in promising directions, and that if we fail to grasp this more basic understanding, we will not be able to sustain such efforts let alone go beyond them.

Being hopeful and taking action in the face of important lost causes (improving education being the one in question) may be less emotionally draining than being in a permanent state of despair. There is also evidence that it may be one of the few routes to success still available to us. To be hopeful is not to be naive, but to struggle to move ahead. Judge Rosalie Abella (1996)—born in a refugee camp in Stuttgart, Germany, on July 14, 1946—may have said it best: "There was nothing expected and everything hoped for."

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Founded in 1943, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a nonpartisan, nonprofit education association with about 200,000 members and 68 affiliate groups in the United States and around the world.

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Following are some of the resources ASCD offers educators—kindergarten through grade 12—as well as others in the education community, including parents, school board members, administrators, and university professors and students. For further information about ASCD, call 1-800-933-2723 or (703) 549-9110 or fax (703) 299-8631. Internet access: gopher.ascd.org; World Wide Web: http://www.ascd.org; e-mail: info@ascd.org. Or write to ASCD, Information Services, 1250 N. Pitt St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

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Education

RETHINKING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE WITH HEART AND MIND

Why does successful, enduring change beyond a few isolated schools continue to elude us? The fundamental problem, says Editor Andy Hargreaves, is that educational change is more complex and controversial than the change literature has recognized. In this book, Hargreaves and the other contributors move the dialogue about change beyond the technical aspects to three essential areas of teaching, learning, and leadership that have received only limited attention: the passion, purpose, and politics of change.

What role should parents, students, and community members play in change efforts? How can educators overcome the tyranny of time? How can they set clear, measurable goals? And what about issues of assessment and accountability? These are among the issues the contributors to this book address. In other chapters, authors look at the role of collaboration among educators in school reform—both within individual schools and in wider reaching networks. On a more serious note, the authors of another chapter explore the political as well as technical issues involved in designating a school as failing or troubled, arguing for more sophisticated ways of designation. The closing chapter expands on a theme of the opening chapter—the place of emotion in educational change—by discussing a second theme, that of hope, without which there is no commitment or optimism that children's lives can be made better.

Each chapter looks realistically but also optimistically at many of the complexities of change. Together, they extend the educational change agenda, confront some of the most difficult obstacles, and offer hope and practical guidance for bringing about positive educational change that benefits all students.

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